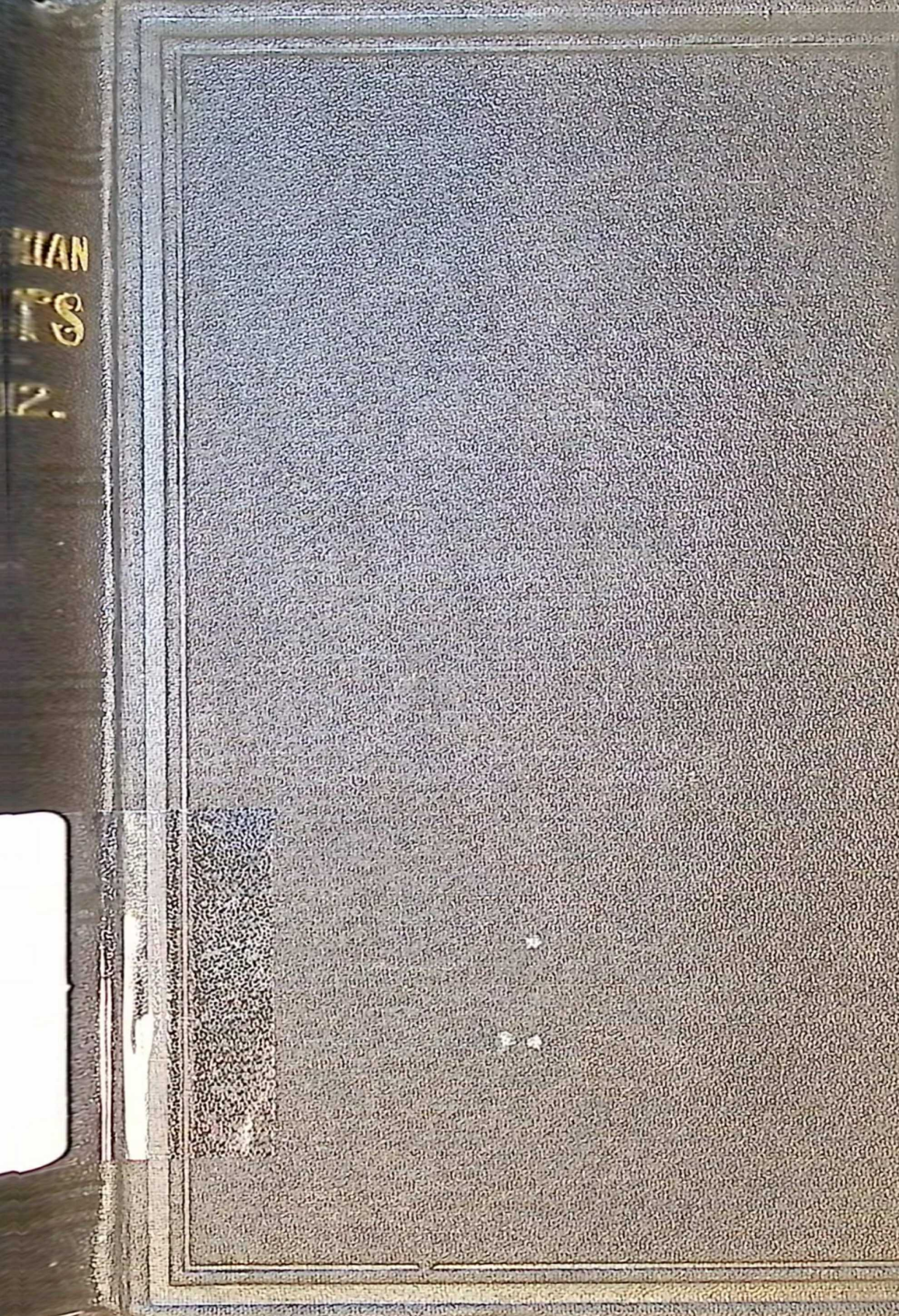

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ON THE

DOCTRINES, ORDER, AND POLITY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WITH SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

VOLUME XII.

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No. 260.

SUDDEN DEATH.

BY THE REV. JONATHAN GREENLEAF, D.D.

The liability to die at any time, and in any way, and under any circumstances, is a consideration which ought deeply and solemnly to impress the mind. But the liability to die *suddenly*, to be hurried from life at a time and in a manner unlooked for and unexpected, strikes the mind with dread, and often causes the stoutest heart to tremble and shake. But such judgments the Lord occasionally sends forth, and the word of his wrath takes effect. "In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight and pass away, and the mighty shall be taken away without hand." When Jehovah thus lifts up his hand no one can stand before him, but high and low, bond and free, all of every age, and sex, and rank, are consigned over to death without warning.

That men often die suddenly we all know. One was in apparent health. He had transacted his business through the day as usual. He partook of the evening meal as usual, and retired to rest. In the morning he did not appear, and on going to his chamber the lifeless body was there, but the soul had fled. This is the history of many. How affecting the thought! When he bade us good-night, no one thought of its being final, not even did he him-

self. How deep the regret! Could we but have known it to have been the last night, we would have sat by him to have caught his parting word.

Here is another whose death was witnessed by many agonizing friends, but the alarm was given, perhaps not an hour ago, and the family rushed around him merely in time to witness the dying struggle. Such a night it was in Egypt when the first born were smitten: "From the first born of Pharaoh that sat upon the throne unto the first born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; for there was not a house where was not one dead." We can well imagine the distress of that hour. In vain did one family run to another for help, as they would meet their neighbours coming to them on the same errand. In a most emphatic sense the people were troubled at midnight and passed away. Sudden death came upon them, and they could not resist the summons.

Untoward providences, such as we call accidents, have taken away multitudes of men with scarce a moment's warning. The falling of a building, the bursting of a steam-boiler, a collision on a rail-road, a plunge of the cars into a river, or some such providence, hurries men into eternity without the time to utter one cry for mercy, or to bid farewell to a friend standing at their side. Thus sudden death falls upon men. "Man knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." So terrible is sudden death. But why? It is the

part of wisdom to press the inquiry. Several important reasons may be assigned.

1. Sudden death is dreadful, as *all the purposes of life are at once broken off before they are completed.* When a life of useful activity is passing, plans are laid and executed for the benefit of men, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. As reflecting men await the gradual close of life they will see their schemes consummated, their worldly business closed up and settled, and all that they desire to do accomplished, and if Christians they will be waiting patiently for their change to come. So Paul waited when he declared, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He doubtless looked upon the grave with unutterable delight as the gate of "Paradise restored." His work was done, and well done. He would gladly have remained in life, and still wrought in the gospel vineyard, but he knew that for himself it would be far better to depart and to be with Christ. Death had no terror for the apostle coming at any time, and under any shape, for his purposes were accomplished. He had finished the work which God had given him to do.

How different is this from the death of one who is cut off suddenly, while as yet his plans are but just laid, and his purposes have not yet ripened into any thing definite! He intended to effect something. He had laid a plan. He had drawn out a scheme of some good which he intended to accomplish, and he was perhaps sincere in all this, but he had delayed to finish his work. Indeed, it was scarcely begun. He had calculated on more time, and now the end has come,

and the work is unfinished. What a source of mourning is here. All of life is spent to no good purpose, for nothing is accomplished. God had said, "Now is the accepted time; to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts;" but the delaying and slothful soul says, "Not now, but to-morrow," and before to-morrow comes death steps in and the soul is lost.

2. Sudden death is dreadful, because *the preparation for an exchange of worlds is closed at once.* The great end of life is to serve God and prepare to die; but there is a great proneness in men to delay the preparation, and to launch out into schemes of business or pleasure which would require a long time to accomplish. Our Lord describes such a case in the man who proposed to build greater barns in which to bestow the fruits laid up for many years, when that very night his soul would be required. The man was not accused of gross crimes, nor that he had acquired his riches by dishonesty, but his character was that of a prudent, worldly man who had been prospered and was desirous of retiring upon his income. But he was unfurnished for the world to come, and to him sudden death must have been dreadful. He had indeed a few hours' notice: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." But the notice was very short, and compared with the preparation to be made, very inadequate. A similar case is supposed by the Apostle James of a man who calculated on a year to come, and a year of uninterrupted prosperity, when his life was but a vapour, and he knew not the events of to-morrow.

3. Sudden death is dreadful to those who are not prepared, because *as men drop into the grave, so they*

will arise to judgment, and so they will remain throughout eternity. We are uniformly taught in the Scriptures that this life is the only season of probation. A trial is arranged, and men fully warned of the end, are admonished to make all due preparation to die while life lasts, while reason continues, and while the invitations of mercy are freely displayed. This thought is urged by Solomon with great force: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest;" teaching by this that in the grave all opportunities of further glorifying God, or of saving the soul, are over, and that whatever we wished to do at all should be done now. Men have indeed sometimes fancied that there was a term of probation after death, a sort of purgatory into which the soul would enter, and there, by a series of sufferings, would be purified from its pollutions and fitted for dwelling with God in glory. Passing by the absurdity of the idea that suffering helps to purify, the language of the sacred writers very clearly proves that we shall look in vain for a change of moral character after the death of the body. If any doubt existed, the word of God in the last chapter of the Revelation would settle the question. Speaking of those who should pass into the eternal world, the sacred writer holds this language: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." If this passage does not prove most conclusively that no change will take place in the characters of men after death, and that

as they drop into the grave so they will remain, it would be very difficult to make language teach that doctrine. This consideration is a most alarming one, when viewed in connection with the subject of sudden death. How dreadful is the thought of dropping our hold on life in a moment, and landing at once in an unalterable state, being fixed in glory or misery according to the character we bear at the time! Could we hope for future probation, were we allowed to entertain any expectation that a space for repentance would be granted us after death, the case would be different. But no. As death leaves us, so judgment will find us, and as the judgment finds us so will our sentence be, and that sentence will never be revoked, no never, NEVER.

Sudden death is, then, to the sinner a most terrible thing. His purposes of life are at once broken off; all his intended preparation for an exchange of worlds is closed, and the state on which he enters is fixed and unchanging. As he is so he remains. When he closes his eyes on this world, if he then loves God he continues to love him, and his affection will brighten, and deepen, and strengthen, while ages pass on and eternity is rolling away. But if he loves sin and the world better than God, then that feeling remains, and sin is his portion for ever. There is no moral change in the grave.

We are taught by this a most important practical lesson, namely, to make all necessary preparation for death while life, and health, and reason remain. We often urge on men the making of a will and the arrangement of their temporal affairs while they have health and a sound mind, and sometimes urge it from the

consideration that it will not shorten their days for a single hour. We may well urge the preparation of the soul for death from the same consideration. How will it prejudice life, or embitter it, or shorten it, to seek God betimes, and secure his favour? Or how will it hurry the approach of death if we get ready for it by acquainting ourselves with God and being at peace with him? So did the great apostle. "I die daily," says he, meaning no doubt that he had accustomed himself to contemplate death, to think of the exchange of worlds, and to prepare to depart hence whenever God should call. This is the part of wisdom for every man, and it is urged upon us by some of the most pressing motives. Suppose we had a long and intricate account to settle with one of our neighbours, and knew not when he would call, would it not be wise to have every thing in preparation? Or suppose we had a suit in court on which our worldly property depended, or even our liberty and life, and the precise time of trial were kept concealed and could only be known at the moment of opening the cause, should we not think it important to be ready at any moment, to have every circumstance adjusted, every paper prepared, and every witness at hand at a moment's warning? Most certainly. And shall then the things of earth, the things of time and sense, the things which perish with the using be judged of more consequence than the soul, and be better cared for than the riches of eternity and an inheritance with the saints in light? Oh, 'tis most unwise thus to neglect the soul, by neglecting the due preparation for death. If we would avoid the alarm consequent upon sudden death, we must have on the righteousness of Christ. Then

when death comes, whether it be at midnight, or at cock crowing, or in the morning, we shall be ready. The summons to depart, which is so dreadful to the unprepared, will be no more to the Christian than a call from a lower to a higher room, and in peace he can close his eyes on a world of sin to be ever with the Lord.

"To-morrow, Lord, is thine,
Lodged in thy sovereign hand,
And if its sun arise and shine,
It shines by thy command.

"The present moment flies,
And bears our life away;
Oh! make thy servants truly wise,
That they may live to-day.

"Since on this winged hour
Eternity is hung,
Waken by thy almighty power
The aged and the young.

"One thing demands our care;
Oh! be it still pursued,
Lest, slighted once, the season fair
Should never be renewed.

"To Jesus may we fly,
Swift as the morning light,
Lest life's young golden beam should die
In sudden, endless night."

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 261.

A RIGHT SPIRIT.

CHRISTIAN.—I am glad to meet with you. I have heard from a mutual friend that you are laboring under very great trouble of mind.

INQUIRER.—Yes. I requested him to give you some idea of my difficulties, that you might perhaps be the better able to understand me when we met. I have tried my utmost, and can find no peace.

C.—I have no doubt you have been very anxious to be at rest in your mind; but the great matter is to try the right plan, rather than to strain every nerve in trying one that can never work. Many imagine that if they put forth all their strength and earnestness of mind, and yet fail to find peace, it must be a very hard thing to find it. They forget that a man may be exerting his strength in a wrong way; and, while it may be easy to accomplish his object did he take another course, he may imagine the thing he is attempting an impossibility. (Isaiah liv. 2.) It may be quite true you have put forth all your strength, but you have been doing so in a very wrong way. Rom. ix. 31, 32, x. 2, 3, 4.

I.—There is certainly something in what you say. I see that I have not so great reason to despond, from what you have just remarked. It is quite possible I may have been striving to effect that which is altogether away from my great object.

C.—That must be the case, seeing you have not found peace; for it is most evident, from the words of Jesus, that his yoke is easy and his burden light, (Matt. xi. 30,) and, consequently, no one can find his plan to be such as requires great and all-but impossible efforts on the part of those who labor and are heavy laden. But perhaps you can give me some idea of what you have been attempting to accomplish, that you might find rest to your soul.

I.—Well, I may say it is all summed up in this,—I have been laboring to come to God *in a right spirit*. I know, or at least I have thought, that unless I can do so, it is impossible he can receive me.

C.—And you have found this very difficult?

I.—Indeed, sir, I have found it impossible. When I go to my closet, and to my knees, and try to approach God, and see so much that is cold and hypocritical and even infidel about my state of mind, I think it out of the question to imagine he can look upon me in any other way than that of abhorrence. I have tried to get my heart right, and I have prayed him to create within me a clean heart; but it is all to no purpose. I feel still the same. I am vile, and what shall I answer? my iniquities like the wind have carried me away. Job xl. 4.

C.—Then, do you suppose that if you could come to God with your heart all righted, he would at once receive you?

I.—Well, I think he surely would. But this is just where I always fail.

C.—But are you quite sure that God would accept of you if you came to him in a perfectly right spirit?

I.—Yes. I think, surely, if I came before him in a truly sincere and right state of mind, he would not reject me.

C.—Then let us examine this point; for I think, as you understand it, there is some reason to doubt if your sureness be well founded. Let me ask you on what ground you think God now refuses to accept of you as you approach him?

I.—On the ground that I am not in a right spirit. He must condemn and abhor such a state of mind as that in which I come.

C.—Then, on what ground would he accept you if you came to him in a thoroughly right spirit?

I.—Well, I suppose on the ground that I worshipped him in spirit and in truth.

C.—Then your great difficulty is, that you cannot get upon this ground so perfectly as you could desire?

I.—This is just my difficulty. I have done my very utmost to come in a right spirit; but I seem to get the longer the worse.

C.—Now, let me ask you this question: Suppose that you get into a thoroughly right spirit, and that you could assuredly believe

that, because of that, God accepted your soul's approach to him: what use would you then have for Jesus Christ in your approach to God?

I.—Well, I must say I did not think of that.

C.—It is surely very wonderful that you should imagine you had done your very utmost to find rest, and that you never thought of Jesus as He by whom alone the spirit of guilty man can find acceptance with God.

I.—I believe in Jesus; I know that it is only through him that we can be saved.

C.—Well, but in what way are you to be saved through Jesus? What use are you to make of Jesus in finding peace with God?

I.—I must confess I have not thought sufficiently on that point.

C.—Suppose that you think of it now. Ask yourself this question:—"In my approaching God, whether am I to be accepted on the ground that Jesus bore my sins and answered for all my deficiencies, or because I have got a right spirit?" How would you answer that question?

I.—Oh, I see I have been thoroughly wrong. I have not taken Jesus into account in the matter. I certainly did believe *about* the Saviour; but I never thought of him as the reason why Jehovah might accept of me as a poor guilty sinner.

C.—You were striving to approach God, and to be received on the ground of your own right spirit. Now you have found that impossible. Would you find it as much so to approach God on the ground, or for the reason, that Jesus honored the law and satisfied justice for your every sin?

I.—Well, I see the reason to be entirely different.

C.—You can easily imagine Jehovah rejecting your state of mind when you approach him on that ground: can you imagine his rejecting your plea when you come on the ground that Jesus answered to offended justice for your sins?

I.—No, I cannot imagine him refusing that. It is the plea which he himself has provided. I am only amazed I did not see that before. I have labored for years to get another ground, while all the time I imagined I knew all about Jesus.

C.—There are very many involved in the same error. But it

is most important to see that a *right spirit* is produced in us, not *in order* to God's accepting of our approaches, but *by means* of his kind and holy acceptance of our unworthy souls *for the sake of Jesus*. He seeks such to worship him as do so "in spirit and in truth;" and hence he comes to man, saying, "Be ye reconciled to God." Mark, not because you have a right spirit, but, "for he hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) When you recognise your God as thus coming to you, and putting the plea of a Saviour's sufferings into your mind and into your lips, it is then you see a good and pure ground on which you can be accepted, and then you begin to entertain a right spirit to Him who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

I.—I feel unutterably thankful that you have thus pointed out to me the way of peace. I see it clearly. Jesus' work, instead of my own right spirit,—that is the point: there I have reversed the order of God. It is marvellous I should not have thought of that. I was told to look to Jesus; but then I always thought I must look in a right spirit, or it would be of no avail. I kept looking *first of all* to my own rightness. Now I see it is his blood, and, as a poor sinner, Jehovah will not reject that as my plea. Heb. ix. 13, 14; 1 Peter i. 18–21.

C.—Let me, in conclusion, call your attention to this scripture, as worthy of your deepest consideration:—"Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high-priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in *full assurance of faith*, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." Heb. x. 19–23.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

THE MIDDLING MAN.

"He that is not with me is against me."—MATT. xii. 30.

Mr. F.—"FROM what you have said, Sam, it seems you think yourself a pretty fair kind of a man."

Sam.—"Well, Mr. F——, I will tell you my opinion about that, exactly. I don't think I ever did much evil; nor can I say that I ever did a great deal of good. I think you may call me *middling Sammy*."

F.—"That is your opinion, Sammy? But don't you think that every thing that exists must have had a cause?"

Sam.—"Certainly I do, Mr. F——; for old Sam is not so void of sense as not to both think and know *that*."

F.—"Well, Sam, what do you suppose is the cause of a good man?"

Sam.—"God, of course, sir."

F.—"And what do you think is the cause of a bad man?"

Sam.—"The devil, most certainly; for God never made any thing bad."

F.—"But, Sam, what is the cause of a *middling* man?"

Sam.—"W-e-l-l, I sup-p-o-s-e——"

F.—"Sammy, I perceive you have got fast there. You say God is the cause of a good man, and Satan is the cause of a bad man, but you say that *you* are *neither!* You are

middling. Doubtless, Sammy, you must have had a *cause*.

"But as there is no middle Being between God and Satan, and only the two revealed causes of *good* and *evil*, then I am at an exceedingly great loss to know what has been the great moral cause that made you *middling*."

Sam.—"Why, sir, I have heard a great many folks like me saying they were middling; but really, when I think of the matter in that good, logical way, I begin to be somewhat doubtful whether I should say I was middling. Yet I assure you, sir, I do not think I should be called a bad old man."

F.—"Sam, did you ever see a middling gold dollar? Or did you ever see a middling bank-note?"

Sam.—"No, never, Mr. F——; they were always either good or bad. But I have known some bad ones to pass for good ones."

F.—Well, Sam, if you never saw middling money, you never saw middling men; and you may rest assured that God's eye is too keen, and his Detector too plain and perfect, to let a bad man pass for a good one; and a '*middling*' man has no existence. So, friend Sam, I want you, when you go home, to think seriously on this matter. 'You cannot serve two masters.' At this moment you are either good or bad, and serving either God or Satan. A *middling man*, then, is a misnomer. You cannot be a middling man. You can have no middling Cause, no middling life, no middling death, and no middling *destiny!*"

Reader! as I said to Sam, so I say to you. You are, at this moment, either *good* or *bad*. You cannot be middling You are either a child of God or a servant of the wicked one. You are either in the kingdom of light or in the regions of darkness; the line of demarcation between those

kingdoms forbids neutrality. And, as there is no medium between good and evil, so there is no medium between sin and duty. Therefore what you are doing at this moment is either right or wrong, a duty or a sin. This is both reasonable and scriptural. And, if you consider this whole subject aright, as a legitimate conclusion, you will be brought to say that while you read this you are either fit for heaven or fit for hell. If good, you will go where the good are; if bad, you will go where the bad are. There is no middling Being; therefore, there can be no middle place for that which does not exist.

But how can you be good? That is the great question.

There are only two ways by which you can be good so as to be accepted of God.

One is to satisfy God for all the sins you have committed against him, and afterward to keep his whole law perfectly.

The other is to find a *substitute* to do this in your stead.

Now, by the first of these ways, you know in your heart that for you goodness in the sight of God is impossible. But by the second the great end can be obtained. For God, not willing that we should perish, has appointed just such a substitute, in the person of his own Son, "that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) And "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" "and by him all that believe are justified from all things." (John iii. 36; Acts xiii. 39.) So, if you believe in Christ, reader, you are, at this moment, "*complete in him*," and "*accepted in him*," and in him as guiltless before God as if you had never sinned; you are properly speaking not only *a good but a perfect man by faith in Christ*. Whoever has this faith must have it in the New Testament sense. He must believe that the atonement of Christ is absolutely perfect, and, as such, that it excludes

for ever every human work and pious requisite the sinner. Reader! if you have this faith in Jesus, you are now fully justified and saved for Jesus' sake and because Jesus has said so. God's record is, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life;" not, will have at some future time when certain conditions have been fulfilled. My beloved friend, this is the most important of all subjects to you, if you desire to be good and happy now and for ever. You see you cannot be *middling*, and there is no possible way of being good but that which I have endeavoured to point out.

Do you believe that you are accepted and saved in Christ? If you believe this, then rejoice in your present salvation, and let your blessed profiting appear unto all men—not that your flesh should glory in his presence, but that He may be glorified in you; for "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Blessed be God! if Christ of God is made unto us all this, we are more than middling. *This is every thing!* Every thing that God asks, and every thing that we can desire! And if Christ is made all this unto *you*, reader, you will not only be renewed in the inner man after his image, not only feel safe and happy, but, like the good tree, your outward fruit will correspond with your inward nature, and in the influence of your wise, righteous, sanctified, and redeemed life you will bring from the world around you glory to your Father in Heaven.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 263.

OUR OWN EFFORTS FAILING.

INQUIRER.—I have come to tell you some of my difficulties, that you may, if possible, help me over them. I have been from childhood kept very strictly to church; and although I did not understand many things that I heard there, I was led to feel that the things which concern the soul are of vast importance. I have for a good time wished much to be a true Christian, and have done what I thought desirable and likely to attain that end; but I am fully convinced I am not at all right yet. Rom. ix. 31, 32; x. 3, 4.

CHRISTIAN.—Would you be so kind as to state to me some of the things which you have done to get a true Christianity?

I.—Last year, in October, the confirmation was held in the town to which I belong; and against my wish, at first, I went to the examination. I did not wish to be confirmed, for I felt I was taking something upon me which I could not discharge. I feel happy I did not put it off; yet somehow I am little or none the better for it in my mind.

C.—How did you expect the confirmation to affect you?

I.—I thought it right to be confirmed, that I might feel myself to be really a child of God after it.

C.—Well, but let us look closely into the matter, and try to form a clear conception of how the laying of the bishop's hands upon your head, with the other ceremonies attending confirmation, could make you a real child of God. Can you form any clear idea of the way in which this ceremony could make you any thing that you were not before?

I.—Well, sir, I confess I have no distinct idea on that point. I have not thought on it before. I feel greatly at a loss to say how it could produce what I expected. Perhaps I have expected too much from a mere ceremony performed by man.

C.—If you expected peace with God, and a truly enlightened assurance of your being one of his children, from any thing done by man, you have certainly been far astray indeed. Have you tried any thing besides the confirmation in order to get true peace?

I.—I have been to the Lord's Supper also. I have felt as if I should not go to this; yet I could not stay away. Oh, sir, I am in a very perplexed state of mind. I felt in going to the communion as if I most certainly ought to take it; and yet my heart is so hard, that I cannot even feel my need of a Saviour: so I could not regard myself as at all rightly prepared for that solemn observance.

C.—Is there any thing else you have done in order to become a real child of God?

I.—Yes; I have prayed for repentance; and for a long time I have felt miserable because I have it not. I do not know that you will at all understand me. My mind is much indeed in the dark. I do need your help, I assure you.

C.—I can help you only by trying to lead you to the true help which is provided for you in Jesus. You have sought safety and peace in the confirmation,—in your own observance of the Lord's Supper,—in your own prayers,—in your own feelings,—in the expected softness and goodness of your heart,—in the wished-for holiness of your own mind. You have found no solid peace in these. What would you think of now seeking peace in the feelings of God's heart (Ps. xxv. 6, 7; ciii. 8–14) instead of the feelings of your own, and in the deep sorrows of Jesus (Isaiah liii. 3, 5) instead of your penitential feelings or tears?

I.—I have no doubt I must have been wrong in some way, though I did not see how.

C.—Well, but think on what I say:—Whether is it reasonable to expect peace and rest to your soul in the ceremonial of the Church, and in the workings and feelings which are your own, or in the feelings of God toward you, and in the agonies which Jesus suffered in your stead? Put the two together. There is the church and your own feelings and observances on the one hand, and here is God's deep compassion and Jesus' great atonement to Divine Justice for your soul. In which of these should you seek true salvation and peace?

I.—When they are thus contrasted, I cannot for a moment

hesitate in concluding that I have been far, far wrong indeed. It seems passing strange that I should not have thought of that before. I always thought I was to find rest and peace by something I was to do and feel in myself. I never thought of finding any thing in God's love or in what Jesus suffered.

C.—Well, now, let us suppose you are a poor orphan, without a relative or friend you could trust; suppose you were most anxious to find one who should adopt you as his own child; suppose that among a great many others your eye lighted upon one whose child you wished above all things to be:—whether, in that case, would you be concerned about his feelings, or about your own?

I.—Oh, certainly I should be concerned about his feelings alone.

C.—Well, you are deeply desirous to be the child of God:—whether do you require to be concerned about your own feelings on the subject, or about his? Whether is it by virtue of his feelings toward you, or of your feelings toward him, that you are to be taken into his family and to have the privilege of calling him Father? 1 John iii. 1.

I.—I see I must look to God's heart, and not to my own, for acceptance.

C.—But have you not been looking for this very assurance all along to your own heart, and not at all looking to God's?

I.—Yes; and I see I have been most seriously wrong. I feel greatly obliged by your explanations.

C.—We must not stop here. There is more than *feelings* in this momentous matter. *God is love*, and loves you with an unspeakable intensity of kind interest. He feels infinitely glad when a poor sinner wishes to be accepted as his child; but there must be a *righteous ground* upon which this acceptance may take place. There must be some good reason why the Judge of all may receive you as a child instead of condemning you as a criminal. Now, whether is this reason to be found in your *repentings* and *doings*, or in the sufferings of Jesus when he humbled himself and died in your stead? 1 John iv. 10; John iii. 16.

I.—I cannot hesitate to answer that it must be found in what Jesus suffered for me, though I have sadly overlooked this hitherto.

C.—Well, now, suppose that, as a poor orphan, and, at the

same time, as a deeply guilty criminal, you stood before a judge; suppose that you are most anxious, not only to be pardoned, but also to be adopted by that very judge as his own child; suppose that your judge is so deeply desirous to have you as his child, that he pays down a large and sufficient ransom as a satisfaction to the law for you, and then, because your ransom is paid, he tells you to call him father and from henceforth to be his child:—would you have any further difficulty? 2 Cor v. 18–21.

I.—I think not.

C.—Then such is the sinner's position before God. He "so loved the world that he gave up his only-begotten Son," a costly ransom, on the ground of which he might come to the sinner and say, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Is not this encouraging? Is it not unutterably cheering to your soul? Can you look up to such a God and say, "No, I will not be thine"? Are you not rather ready to sing for gratitude, not in thinking of your own goodness, but of his matchless love and the great ransom paid for your soul? Rev. i. 5, 6.

I.—I do bless God that he has given me new objects of contemplation. It is as if I had been for years looking down into a dark pit, and had all at once had my eyes turned upward to a glorious sky. Oh, how wonderfully different it is to think of God's heart, from what it has been to brood over my own! Isaiah li. 11.

C.—Are you now afraid of God?

I.—No. How can I be afraid of Him who loves me with infinite kindness, and who has himself paid the ransom of my guilty soul?

C.—Are you not sorry that you ever sinned against him?

I.—Yes: I now see that the contemplation of God's kind heart, and of Jesus' sorrows, is more than sufficient to melt a heart of stone.

C.—Well, as we must now part, let me entreat you to give time and care to the study of your God. It is in studying the heart and work of Jesus that you drink of the living water which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (John vii. 37–39.) Let these be your chief study, and then you will feel aright, and also seek carefully and constantly to act in all things so as to honor your God.

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GOD OUR GUIDE.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM E. SCHENCK, D. D.

"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not."—Isa. xlii. 16.

True wisdom confirms the decision of Scripture, not only as to spiritual things, but as to all things, when it says, "If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything," that is, if he regard himself as perfect in knowledge, "he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." It is only the ignorant man who can feel that he knows everything. And the more truly well-informed an individual becomes, the more ready is he to confess, not only that he does not, but also that he cannot know much. Even as to external objects, things which fall under the cognizance of the senses, it cannot be said that we perfectly know them. The veriest child may ask questions about a straw or a clod of earth, which the wisest philosopher would be unable to answer. The question, What is matter? or gravitation? or light? or heat? or time? or space? cannot be answered. We know many things about their appearances and laws, but what they are, no man can tell. In every blade of grass, and breath of air, in the formation of our own bodies, in the nature of the animal life which we possess, in all things

around us and within us, there are mysteries—things yet unlearned by man.

If we look forth upon the universe of God, the little circle of light by which we are surrounded is perceived to be itself surrounded by an illimitable circumference of darkness. The most powerful optic-glass helps not so much to perfect our knowledge, as to reveal to us the vastness of our ignorance. Hence, Sir Isaac Newton, who astonished the civilized world by his discoveries, and whose name stands among the brightest and most imperishable upon the annals of human science, declared, when far in the decline of life, that "he seemed to himself to have been like a child, picking here and there a pebble on the shore, while the vast ocean of truth yet lay undiscovered before him."

If we pass from material to spiritual objects, we are yet more emphatically ignorant and blind. Leave out of view the teachings of God's word, and what do we know of the spiritual world? Can we tell what orders of intelligences dwell there? or what may be the mode of their existence? or what their moral character? or what connection they may have with us, and what influence over us? We must resort not to the poet, but to the inspired writer to ascertain the fact that

> Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we sleep, and when we wake.

We are surrounded by principalities, and powers, and ministering spirits, who are ever active, for weal or woe, in influencing our conduct, in guiding our steps, in aiding to fix our everlasting destinies. Man does not probably so much influence man; the friends

and relatives and business associates, by whom you are each surrounded from day to day, do not probably exercise so much influence over your present conduct and everlasting destiny, as unseen intelligences, good and bad, are doing. Yet what do we know of them, save what the Bible tells us? Nothing—absolutely nothing. We walk amidst these spiritual beings as men walk amidst their fellow-men, when in total darkness or in blindness. We see them not—we know them not.

If we look to our own path or progress in life, we find ourselves not at all better informed concerning that which lies before us. We walk forward in the path of life, as men walk who grope their way in a strange road, step by step, in total blindness. We have no faculty of the mind by which we can penetrate the future, as memory can penetrate the past. There is a thick curtain hung across our course, so thick that the most penetrating gaze can never pierce it, nor the most sagacious contrivance ever rend it; a curtain which recedes before us as we advance, but only step by step, yet revealing to us at each advance, things most unexpected, often most undesired, frequently most startling in their nature. All human wisdom has never yet devised a way to ascertain what a single day or hour may bring forth. Men have earnestly longed to know the future, and have tried to know it, but without success. The extent to which astrology, fortune-telling, and similar impositions have been patronised in every age, shows how eagerly men would know, if they could, what lies before them. But auguries, and omens, and oracles, and every kindred device, however ingeni-

ously contrived, and with whatever skill practised, have failed to draw aside the veil which hides futurity from sight.

With what truthfulness therefore does the word of God everywhere represent man, especially in their natural state, as blind; as persons who cannot see before them the path in which they walk, and who are also walking in a new and strange path; a path with which no information to be acquired from others can render them familiar.

This view of our situation may seem dark and gloomy. But admitting it to be so, is it *less true*, because dark and gloomy? We admit that it is to him who is forgetful of his God and unreconciled to him, an awe-inspiring glimpse of his present situation. And we would that every forgetter of God might feel it to be so. How know you, O man, O woman, whose pursuits, and plans, and pleasures all have reference to this life, and who art either carelessly or confidently trusting to unaided human wisdom—how know you that you may not be wandering even now in the by-paths of error and delusion to the ruin of your soul? How know you that some awful precipice may not be near at hand across the very path in which you tread? How know you that your foot may not be pressing even now the brink, so that a single step may plunge you into the bottomless pit? You cannot know it. You are not sure that this very day may not bring forth your everlasting ruin.

But the word of God does not more explicitly reveal to us our ignorance and blindness, than it offers to us a great and infallible Guide. "*I* will

bring the blind by a way that they know not," says Jehovah himself. It is a promise, made, as the previous context shows, with reference to the Saviour's coming and his work. It is a promise made to the children of God, in their natural state, as blind and ignorant as others, and exposed to the same dangers. *They* should be led in a way that they knew not. Their course should be one that was not of their own choosing. And it was to be a course at every stage and turn unexpected and surprising.

Let our minds be now directed to the inquiry, whether or not this promise is verified in the experience of God's people. Can we perceive in the way by which they are led along, anything so new and unexpected—so without or even so contrary to their own plans and anticipations, that we may believe there is a superhuman wisdom planning for them, and a hand of infinite power leading them along?

I. In answer to this question we first reply, that such a guidance may be traced in the dealings of God with his children *by his providence.*

A recent historian of the Reformation has placed in the forefront of his immortal work this sentence respecting it: "This history takes as its guiding-star the simple and pregnant truth that *God is in history.*"* That single sentence contains a world of important truth. Other historians have sought to make their books valuable and valued by means

* D'Aubigne's Hist. of the Reformation, preface.

of accurate and learned statements; by picturesque ness and beauty of description; by deep and philosophical reflections; but almost without exception they have forgotten this cardinal truth, that the hand of God has wrought in all the affairs of men. They have described the rise and fall of nations; the changes, progress, and convulsions of the nations of the earth; but amidst the establishment and overthrow of thrones, the intrigues of politicians and the clang of arms, they have forgotten the chief, even the first cause of all—GOD, "working all things according to the counsel of his own will." And no little share of our forgetfulness of God may be attributed to that silent lie of all our histories, which has kept out of view the important fact, that "God is not far from every one of us."

The recorded history of the Jewish nation affords a beautiful illustration of the truth, that God is active in all human affairs. Had that history been for the first time written out by an uninspired hand, it had no doubt differed little from other histories. We should have had a minute, and perhaps, as to outward things, an accurate account of the Jewish origin in Abraham, and thence down to the Redeemer's time the long series of outward changes, while the presence and power of God had been almost unseen and unthought of, and the various wonderful turns in their affairs been, as far as possible, ascribed to, and explained by, merely natural causes. But God became himself the author of that history. The Holy Ghost enabled holy men to perceive and to record *the truth*. And hence, in every event of Jewish history, we see the hand of

God, not only in its miraculous, but in its most ordinary occurrences. The veil was drawn aside, and the cause of this thing and of that thing was seen in the Divine Mind, as well as in nature and in man. And had God inspired another prophet to write the history of any other nation, yea, had God inspired a prophet to write your individual history, my reader, or my own, I doubt not we should be startled and astonished to see how busy the hand of God has been in its every stage and turn. I know we should be made to feel as we have never felt, that if there is less of miracle, there is no less of Providence around us now, than was around the Jews in the days of their theocracy.

And yet, blinded as our understandings are by sin, and heedless as we are of the hand of God while it works, we can often clearly see the traces of that hand when its work is done. However tame and commonplace his course of life, I venture to assert, that there is no one who can sit down in still retirement, and take a careful and candid retrospect through adult years back to the scenes of childhood's early days, who will not feel the calm conviction steal in upon his soul, that there has been an unseen hand leading him in paths that he knew not. The assertion of the poet finds a response, not only in our experience, but also in the very depths of our dependent nature, when he says,

> There's a divinity which shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.

This same sentiment was uttered, only in other

words by a more infallible poet and philosopher long before, when he said, "The heart of a man deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."

Did you ever try the experiment of taking such a calm and careful retrospect? If not, no wonder if the doctrine of a special Providence has taken little hold upon your mind and heart. Try, I beseech you, the profitable experiment, and see if you be not convinced. Tear yourself away from the busy world which now crowds upon your thoughts, and from the relations which bind you to the present, and flee back to the sunny days of childhood. Surround yourself again with the smiles of those whom you then loved, and on whom you then leaned for happiness. Call back the gladsome, buoyant spirit which then dwelt within your bosom. Bid memory again paint upon the canvas of your soul the sunlit landscape of the future. Bid her re-colour the faded and almost forgotten visions of future enjoyment. Bid her delineate afresh the erased and neglected plans for future usefulness, success, and happiness. And then, when you have done well and carefully all this, go forward and retread the path of life, carrying with you those recovered plans and pictures of the future, and at each step compare the anticipation or resolve with the reality. And how do they agree? Ah how? You meant to do so and so. Did you do it? You meant to be so and so. Did you fulfil your design? Did you even always alter your designs voluntarily as you went forward? Although ignorant of your history, I answer for you—you did not. You found unforeseen circumstances arising all along the way to alter your determinations and to change your

course. Now some seeming accident occurred, perhaps the veriest offspring of a moment, to mar your plan. Here some unexpected reverse of fortune overtook you, which with all your wisdom and exertions you could not avert. There some bereavement snatched away a relative or friend whose departure dashed many a fond hope, and threw many a well-laid scheme into confusion. And how many parts of life, unpainted in your youthful picture, have you not encountered! Passions have been stirred up which you never meant should have a place within your bosom. Trials and troubles and temptations have occurred, the nature and perhaps the very existence of which you knew not of when you started on your journey. Friends whom you deemed true as truth itself, have forgotten you, perchance have become your enemies. Sickness has laid you now and then upon a bed of languishing, and brought you to the brink of eternity, or perhaps has more permanently benumbed your susceptibilities for enjoyment. So by a thousand unforeseen incidents, you have been led by a way that you know not, and reached to-day a position, both as to inward character and outward relations to the world, which it was no part of your original plan to reach. Is it not so? And now as you contrast your present self with your former picture of your then future self, does not either this or that, as the case may be, seem to be a caricature and mockery of the other?

Now why is this? Why have you been unable to walk in that path you marked out for yourself? Why, in spite of your utmost exertions to go in it,

have your feet been turned aside? How happens it that you have been often diverted when you were unwittingly just entering some labyrinth of trouble, or about to step blindly off some precipice of guilt and ruin? How is it that you have been so often protected from yourself, and thwarted for your good? Ah! it is because you have had an unseen Guide. And although you perhaps felt not his gentle grasp which was laid upon you, and acknowledged not his goodness, he has not left you to walk alone a single step, or to take your own chosen path when He saw it would not be for your advantage. He has brought you in your blindness by a way that you knew not. And just as really as he led his ancient Israel, day by day, by a pillar of fire and of cloud, just so really is he now leading by his own presence, every one of his own dear children towards the heavenly Canaan. And although he may lead them through the depths of the sea, or the rugged desert, by blessings and by chastisements, He will, by his providence, be with them still, until they reach their journey's end, for his promise is, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*"

II. But we are far from having yet reached the full meaning of this promise, which we must regard, from its close connection with the previous prophecy concerning Christ, as having reference yet more to the leadings of God's *Spirit* than of his providence. I proceed, then, to remark yet more emphatically, that God leads his children by a way that they know not, *in the dealings of his grace.* He, by his grace, lays hold upon them at a time when

they do not expect him, and in a way in which they look not for him; and from that moment, until they reach their heavenly destination, their progress in the paths of righteousness is, at every step, new, strange, and surprising to themselves. Let us briefly see if it be not so.

When God, by his Spirit, comes to apply unto the the soul the redemption that is in Christ, he first of all produces in the soul *a perception of its own guilt and wretchedness.* This conviction God causes to lay hold upon the soul, usually *at a time* as unlikely, as he does in ways wonderfully various. Behold the woman of Samaria! She goes forth from her household as usual, to fill her vessel with water at the well of Jacob; she finds a tired stranger sitting on the well, and perceives him to be of the hated nation of the Jews; she enters into a brief conversation with him, and soon stands conscience-stricken and self-condemned before the acknowledged Messiah. Behold the assembly which stood before the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost! There are men out of every nation under heaven, who have come up to Jerusalem, not to find salvation, but for purposes of trade and ceremonial worship. There, too, stand the men of Judea, who have just now taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain, the Lord of glory, their hearts and hands yet reeking with the Redeemer's blood. They have just reached the climax of human guilt. Yet, strange to tell, there they stand, convinced of sin, and crying—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Behold the thief upon the cross! Regardless alike of the claims of God and of humanity, his crimes have brought him near to

death. Even amidst the agonies of crucifixion, the two thieves at first both railed on Jesus; but soon the one is heard rebuking his companion, saying, "Dost thou not fear God?" while he turns his supplicating cry to Jesus, "Lord, remember me." Behold blaspheming, persecuting Saul! With an exceeding madness in his heart against the saints of God, breathing forth threatenings and slaughter, with the commission of the high priest for their destruction on his person, a light shines around him, a voice from heaven smites upon his ear, and the bloody persecutor humbly, tremblingly inquires, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Behold the jailer at Philippi! He retires to his rest as unconcerned about his soul as usual, but at midnight he is heard crying in alarm, "What must I do to be saved?" John Newton became convinced of sin while in a slave-ship, and engaged in a course of gross and shocking licentiousness. A late and celebrated clergyman of England was pierced by his first convictions of sin by hearing from the minister who occupied the pulpit the simple words, "Let us pray." Two students in one of our colleges, while a revival was in progress, some years ago, mutually agreed to attend an inquiring meeting, that they might amuse themselves by practising deception upon the officiating clergyman. When the meeting was called to prayer, they kneeled among the rest, and, while upon their knees, they were both smitten by the power of the Spirit. Thus, "fools who came to scoff, remained to pray;" and so unexpectedly found salvation in the cross of Christ.

It is ever so. God is characteristically a God who

is found of them that sought him not. Often does he meet the criminal in his dungeon cell, and reclaim him to himself. Often does he meet the licentious man in the midst of his licentiousness: sometimes the dying sinner, as he did the thief upon the cross, when all hope seems preposterous. Not seldom does he bring the sinner to repentance when he has just reached a point, where he is more than ever surrounded by manifold and strong temptations: when he had perhaps long disregarded affectionate parental prayers and admonitions, the warnings of a preached Gospel, the strivings of the Holy Spirit: when he had begun to indulge in new species of iniquity: when he was peculiarly exposed to evil influences or companions: when in short his case seemed more than ever hopeless. When Satan had shielded his bosom most carefully with some choice and adamantine breastplate from the armoury of hell, then did the king make sharp his arrows to pierce it through and through, and reach the heart beyond. Thus, generally, (may I not say always?) does God magnify the power of his grace.

As to the *nature* no less than the occasion *of these convictions*, God works in unexpected ways. Men often think that conviction of sin is little more than to know that one is a sinner. Hence they often expect that when a suitable time, a convenient season, shall have come, it will be sufficient just to read and meditate upon this fact, that they are sinners. And he, who once entertained this thought, but has since become a child of God, has probably been taken by surprise when the Spirit opened the eyes of his understanding. He was astonished to find how stony, how

unyielding, how unfeeling a heart he carried in his bosom. He was astonished to find, how averse he was from God, and how depraved he is in all his nature. He is amazed to see how things before regarded as innocent, have become vile; how the favourite sins which he hugged to his bosom have become serpents and scorpions which he cannot get rid of: how the carnal nature which he before delighted to gratify, (so far at least as outward appearances and the good opinion of those around him would allow) is now transformed into a putrid carcase—a "body of death"—from which he longs and strives to be set free.

The same remark also applies to *the means which God employs to arrest his children* in their thoughtless way. They perhaps expected to go up the slope of Calvary by some path of their own choosing, but how has God disappointed them! They were intending, when a convenient time had come, to seek salvation leisurely and gently, as a mere matter of self-interest. But, lo! the Spirit of God came down upon them like a rushing mighty wind, in which the soul, like some tall forest tree, was swayed and bowed before the blast as if its destruction were at hand. While God was effecting the transformation of the old creature into the new, all its powers seemed convulsed by the greatness of the change. Or, more probably, the sinner then impenitent, was looking for some mighty exertion of God's power; waiting for, and desirous of some powerful revival in the community, or some indubitable, heart-breaking sense of guilt laid upon himself. He felt that until God almost struck him to the earth by the thunderings and lightnings of the law, he could not be in God's path towards heaven. And

how did God disappoint him also! The power of the Spirit descended upon him like the gentle shower, or the evening dew. Some striking providence; some simple truth repeated in his hearing for the thousandth time; some whispered admonition of a Christian friend; some long-known text of holy Scripture; awakes attention, decides for action, bows down the soul gently, yet with true convictions, before God. God has led the sinner to conviction by a way that he knew not.

The same is eminently true of *the apprehension and acceptance of Jesus Christ: the act of faith.* It is wonderful how defective, how distorted, how every way wrong, are men's views of Jesus Christ previous to the experience of faith. They may have learned the whole orthodoxy of the subject. Yet there are some things here which the natural man cannot discern. There seems to be a veil—a dark and terrible veil—drawn before the eyes of men, which shuts out the sight of Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life." This strange, this universal blindness of men to Christ, and to his relation to our salvation, meets us at every turn in the endeavour to lead souls to Heaven, and their inability to comprehend the grand and spirit-stirring message of salvation when set before them in the clearest terms, can only be explained by recurring to the Apostolic declaration—"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." When God saves a sinner, this dark and terrible veil is torn from his eyes by the power of the Holy Ghost, and to the soul's recovered vision is pre-

sented "Christ, the image of God," in all his divine fulness, in all the completeness of his offices, in all the freeness of his offers. He becomes its wisdom, its righteousness, its sanctification, its redemption. The soul now bows down before him, leans upon him, clings to him, takes him as its all in all. He, who was just now "without form or comeliness," has become "the one altogether lovely." And now as the soul looks back upon its bygone times of ignorance, it is filled with astonishment and humiliation because it never *thus* saw Christ before,—so free, so simple, so beautiful, so perfect does his salvation appear. The believing soul feels and is ready to confess that in revealing to it such a sight; in giving to it such a trust, God has been leading it in ways which it knew not.

The divine methods for leading the believer to growth in grace are not less unexpected. When the new-born child of God looks forth upon the path of holiness, into which his feet are, by grace, just turned, it seems to him to lie, throughout its whole extent, across green pastures and beside still waters, and, with the most sanguine and pleasing anticipations, he presses on. He sees not the difficulties of the way, and is, therefore, almost ready to chide others for their tardy pace, while he forms high resolutions for himself. He will never lag, let others do what they may. But he has not gone far before he finds that even here he cannot walk in ways of his own choosing. Perhaps he has begun with too much self-confidence, or too much pride, and it is best he should be humbled. Hence, he has not gone far before his feet are found in in a more rugged and more toilsome path. Temptations are around him, and sometimes he falls beneath their

power. Unexpected hindrances arise on this side and on that, until he finds, at length, that his own strength is perfect weakness. Perhaps he is in prosperity, and he is found yielding to self-applause, to self-indulgence, or to avarice. Perhaps he is in adversity, and he yields to despondency, to repinings, to distrust of God. Beloved objects of affection are spared, and he idolizes them. They are torn away, and he murmurs at his Father's act. Without are fightings and within are fears. Yet he trusts in God. He presses onward. He prays day by day for growth in grace. Who that lives a life of faith cannot appreciate the language of that touching hymn?—

I hop'd that in some favour'd hour,
At once he'd grant me my request,
And by his love's constraining pow'r
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more; with his own hand he seem'd
Intent to aggravate my woe
Cross'd all the fair designs I schem'd,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried,
"Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer pray'r for grace and faith."

And is such the experience of the young convert who started but yesterday upon the road heavenward, full of ardent hopes and high resolves? Yes. God

has put the gold in the furnace. He is tearing loose the roots of the tree, that he may soon transplant it to a better soil. He is guiding his child by a more rugged road, because his eye sees dangers in the path of uninterrupted progress and enjoyment, even in spiritual things. And he will continue, even to the end of life, thus to bring the blind by a way that they knew not.

Still further; even *on the believer's death-bed* is this precious promise often and gloriously fulfilled. See: there is a believer who has been all his lifetime in bondage, through fear of death. Every sign of its approach has filled him with alarm, and the knowledge that he himself must sometime pass through that dread change has filled his soul with trembling. And now his time has come. The silver cord will soon be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken. Flesh and heart already begin to fail him. But lo! to his surprise, his soul is calm. The destroyer has lost all his terrors. The everlasting arms are underneath him, and he joyfully exclaims, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me!"

There is another believer whose countenance was always sad. It was not so much that he feared the King of Terrors, but he doubted his interest in Christ. He feared to appropriate unto himself the precious promises and consolations of the gospel lest he should be a self-deceiver. He feared to utter a clear testimony on the side of Christ, lest he should be uttering heartless words. Now he, too, must enter that dark valley. And how can he, who always

feared while in life and health, be otherwise than in despair in this his day of awful trial? But look! how serene and cheerful is his aspect! The dark clouds are now all cleared away. The Sun of Righteousness is pouring its effulgence full upon him. And, as he disappears from mortal sight, his last shout, clear and joyful, comes ringing back into our ears: "I know that my Redeemer liveth! O, death! where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory?" God leads his people, even in the hour of death, by a way that they knew not.

I will only add, that as the path by which God leads his people is in its beginning, and in all its progress, so is it *in its termination*—one which they know not. Our heavenly destiny is veiled from mortal sight. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." The believer's has all along been a surprising course; but here, my brethren, will be by far the greatest surprise of all, when he bursts away from his habiliments of flesh, and the remaining bonds of sin, and finds himself in the abodes of glory. What new, what strange, what ecstatic sensations will then rush in upon him! What yet untasted sources of enjoyment will then be open to him! What vast discoveries of wisdom, and of power, and of grace, as yet unguessed at, will he make! What seraphic raptures, what holy companionships, what a blessed eternity will be his! Refine the joys of earth as you may—exert your imaginations to the utmost—you have not yet conceived adequately of the joys and glories of that heavenly home towards which God by his grace is daily leading each and every one of his dear children. And when the first tumult of that

great surprise shall have subsided, it will be one occupation of that eternity of bliss, to look back along the way by which the Lord your God has led you, and to trace his goodness, his wisdom, and his power in its every step. Then and there, as you review his dealings with you in the pure light of heaven, you will see cause to praise him for ever and for ever more, that he gave you not the choice of your own path, but led you, in your blindness, by a path which but for his constant gracious guidance you had never known.

Accept, then, I beseech you, Christian brethren, the joy and strength these words are suited and intended to afford you. Believe that your heavenly Father is continually at your side, and choosing all your paths. Commit your way into his keeping. Trust to his wisdom in all your perplexities and straits. Lean on his powerful arm in all your weakness; relying on his firm promise that he never will forsake you. Be submissive and reconciled to his will in all things. Cast your eyes forward from his present dealings to their glorious issues; and be ever careful to testify your gratitude by your obedience and by your praise.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 265.

"CONDEMNED ALREADY."

A CONVERSATION

WITH

A WOUNDED SOLDIER.

"ARE you going to Heaven, my friend?" I asked of a wounded soldier in the Hospital under my care.

"I hope so," was the reply.

"And *why* do you hope so?" I inquired.

"Well—I suppose—if a man dies fighting for his country, he goes to Heaven," replied he, with some hesitation.

"It is true indeed, my friend, that your country applauds your self-sacrifice in stepping forward to defend its government, and that *from your countrymen* you may justly claim praise. But all this concerns this world and your relations with your fellow-men. When you come to a question of *Salvation*, you have Christ's saying: 'The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day.'

"Now, sir, the faith you have professed is that of a *Mohammedan*, not that of a Christian. He taught that his warriors were transported from the battle-field at once to a world of sensual delights. You hope to win God's salvation by fighting for your country. Let, I pray you, Christ speak to you:

"'He that *believeth not* shall be damned.'

"'HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY.' And why? 'Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'

"Now, my friend, as an unbeliever, God has set His stamp on your soul, and it is in the awful words, 'CONDEMNED ALREADY.' Go—laugh—trifle—'make light of it' among your companions if

you will; but remember, God's brand is on you, 'CONDEMNED ALREADY,' and with every oath and jest the already pronounced judgment of God that hangs over you, is but confirmed.

"Suppose, for a moment, your companions saw your case as plainly written on your brow as God and angels see it, and at every turn you were accosted with:

"'What, comrade, are you condemned?'

"'Yes! I am doomed to die.'

"'Why are you condemned?'

"'Because I will not receive the Gospel, nor believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, the Saviour and the rightful King."

"'Is your sentence certain?'

"'God has said so.'

"'What is the time fixed for your execution?'

"'I do not know. I am liable to it at any moment, both body and soul.'

"You look in the glass. There again—loyal to your country, but a rebel against God—you see stamped on your forehead,

'CONDEMNED ALREADY,'

—words that burn into your brain like fire. Will you not, as one in peril of your life every hour, flee to a provided refuge, receive a free ransom, and so wipe out those terrible words?"

Such faithful and plain words to a wounded man in a hospital, God blessed in snatching from the snare of the fowler one whom Satan had deluded into the thought, that dying in his country's service was to receive God's salvation. He lived to thank with deep emotion the plain dealing friend who showed him his fatal error, and led him to exercise faith in the true and only Saviour.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 266.

THE SCARLET LINE.

JOSHUA ii. & vi.

THE city of Jericho was a very rich and populous city in the land of Canaan, inhabited by people who had forgotten God, and cared only for the riches and pleasures of this life. We are not told that they were openly filthy and immoral in their lives, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah; but they lived at ease; the world was pleasant to them; all things prospered; and though outward decency and morality were perhaps kept up, yet "God was not in all their thoughts." They were, in fact, much like the rest of the world, striving how to get on in it, careless about God; and if a thought of judgment came across their minds, they put off the unpleasant thought by persuading themselves, "The world will last out our time;" "God is merciful;" "We are not worse than our neighbours;" or some such notion. Such was Jericho; but as such, God had sentenced it to destruction. All, indeed, looked fair and prosperous; the well-watered plain was green and fertile as ever; the river Jordan, gently overflowing its banks, made the meadows most productive; the men of the city were strong, healthy, and active; all that they turned their hands to seemed to

prosper; there was no feebleness, no decay; and their city was so strongly built, and so ably defended, that it could defy any army of the enemy, and no human power could prevail against it. And yet the sentence had been passed by God upon Jericho, and hung over the city, notwithstanding its seeming prosperity. God saw that their iniquity was full, and their judgment slumbered not.

Now look around you on the world. It has been, as Jericho was, sentenced of God to destruction. True, there are no outward signs of it which your eye can see; seasons return, day follows night, all goes on as ever, and yet the sentence is passed. You are living in a world that is under judgment. Fearful thought! At any moment the judgment may come; certain it is to come when men least expect it. "The day of the Lord will come as *a thief in the night;* in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." (2 Pet. iii. 10.)

But before Jericho was destroyed, Joshua sent "two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there." (Josh. ii. 1.)

Alarm at the judgments of God, of which they had heard, had indeed taken hold of all the inhabitants of the land, but it was a terror soon forgotten; and so

far were the people of Jericho from taking warning from what they had heard, that their king wished to have the two men delivered up, that he might kill them; and had it not been for the faith and kindness of Rahab, they might have perished at his hands. And so it is now with this world: warning after warning has God been sending before the fearful destruction comes; but who believes the report? Who flees from the wrath to come? Almost all mock at it; some are angry at being disturbed by it; others exclaim against such uncharitable doctrine, as if God were really going to judge the earth, as if men were really as bad as such preachers would make them out to be. But there was one woman, even in Jericho, who believed God's word, and received the spies with peace,—Rahab, a harlot, the worst woman in the city, despised and spurned by all; yet she boldly says, "*I know* that the Lord hath given you the land." She had not indeed any better means of knowing it than others; she had only heard the same reports as they had, but she believed it to be true; for she could say, "The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." It was this belief, this faith, that saved her. To believe is, you see, a very simple thing. Rahab had heard of the people of Israel, that God had divided for them the waters of the Red Sea; she had heard how they had destroyed their enemies on the other side of Jordan, and she believed it all.

She had indeed never seen these wonderful people about whom she had heard so much, and when the spies, who were two of them, came to ask a lodging at her house, they seemed but poor, wearied, way-worn men; but what she had heard had sunk deep into her heart; she believed that God who thus protected the Israelite was the true God, and therefore she received the spies gladly; she preserved and sheltered them at her own risk. Here was faith and its fruits; faith so that she could believe a tale of distant wonders, wrought for a people of whom she knew nothing except by report, and by a God of whom before she had been ignorant—faith, which, when two of these people presented themselves at her door, made her receive them joyfully, and own them as the messengers of God.

And now, dear reader, a message from God is sent to you, in the midst of this ruined world: on the one hand, telling you that judgment now hangs over this doomed earth; for "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) On the other hand, the message is, that "He who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." No condemnation awaits such an one; he is delivered from all the wrath that shall be poured out upon this earth. Washed

clean in the blood, and accepted in Christ as his righteousness, he will be a partaker of the happiness and glory of God, when the heavens shall depart "as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every mountain nd island shall be moved out of their places."

But let us proceed with the history of Rahab. After telling the two men that she knew the Lord had given them the land, she proceeds: "Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee." So certain is Rahab that destruction is coming on Jericho, that she must have an oath and a token from the spies for her safety, before she lets them go. She will take no denial; and they are ready to give all that she desires. Upon their own lives they stake her safety: "Our life for yours." They had no need to go back and ask Joshua, their captain, whether they might spare her life; no, they can pledge themselves, knowing assuredly the mind of their captain; and as surely as they knew they should triumph over the city, so certain were they that Rahab and her

house would be spared. Blessed confidence! Two poor spies in the midst of an enemy's city in peril of their lives, and far from their own army, can pledge their lives to a poor harlot, that she and her house shall be safe; fully assured that the land will be theirs, on the one hand, and that they have power to proclaim deliverance to Rahab, on the other.

And this, dear reader, is like the message and pledge of the gospel which I can now give to you. In the midst of an evil world that hates the Lord Jesus, with sin and Satan contending in every way with every delusion against the truth; yet in the name of Him who is the Captain of our salvation, I can pledge to you full, free, eternal deliverance, from all the guilt of sin, from all the condemnation of this world, from all the power of Satan and of Death, if you only believe God's word about Jesus. No doubtful message, no uncertain deliverance, is this which is freely presented to you of God. Were I to put an *if* to it, were I to offer it upon any conditions, were I to tell you only to hope for salvation, I should be a false messenger—a lying ambassador. No; full, free, everlasting redemption you need. Salvation, about which there cannot be a shadow of doubt, alone will satisfy the desires of your soul; and such is the gracious provision of God in Christ for every sinner that really feels his need: "Whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life *freely*." Here, you see, the offer is free to every one that

willeth. "He that believeth hath *everlasting life.*" Here, you see, the gift is *everlasting.* "God justifieth the *ungodly.*" Here, you see, it is the ungodly—the sinner, who has the blessing.

But Rahab wanted also a token. "And the men said unto her..... Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless; and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him..... And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: *and she bound the Scarlet Line in the window.*" Here was the token for Rahab that she and all within her house were safe —the Scarlet Line of thread in the window.

And you also want a token. God has given an all-sufficient one to the poor sinner—*the blood of the Lord Jesus.* Look to it as your shelter from wrath, and you are safe: you need fear no judgment then; for the blood tells of judgment already passed upon, and borne by, another. Do you fear the wrath of God on account of sin? Behold, the blood of Jesus tells us that wrath has been visited upon him to the utter

most, on account of the sin of others which he bore. Do you feel the uncleanness and pollution that sin defiles you with, making you unfit for God's holy presence? The testimony of God is, that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." The word of God alone is that upon which the sinner has to rest; and that word points to the blood, and tells of the blood as the token of the entire cleansing, entire forgiveness, of the sinner who believes.

But perhaps you may say, "How am I to look upon the blood? How do I know that I have any right to the precious blood of Jesus? I want to know that it is mine, that it has been shed for me." Dear reader, if such are your thoughts, there is one simple answer to them all. Do not distress yourself as to whether or not the blood has been shed for you; only believe that *God* looks upon it; that *God* is satisfied with it as a full answer for sin; that *God* esteems it precious; that it is the witness to *him* of judgment passed—of holiness and righteousness and justice satisfied.

The Scarlet Line in the window of Rahab was to be the token, not to her only, but to the Israelites, that her house was safe. The blood of Jesus is the token, not to the sinner only, but to God, that the sinner trusting in it is safe. God, who is the judge of all, says, that the blood of his Son has been "shed for many for the remission of sins;" and he sends this message to you, and if you believe it, you are saved.

And as to who has a right to the precious blood, why, of course, they are welcome to it, who feel their need of it. Such a Lamb needed not to have been slain, if the case of sinners had not been desperate. The Son of God did not leave the bright glory of his Father and come down into this world of death in search of righteous people. Had he been in search of holy, or good, or pure things, he would not have left heaven. He came to find sinners, to call sinners, to seek and save the lost; and therefore he came into this earth, where there are none but ruined, lost sinners—where there are none good, none righteous, no not one. (Rom. iii.) Dear reader, the poor harlot Rahab had no righteousness to boast of, no goodness to depend upon. What had her life been? One of notorious profligacy; yet Jericho perished, and she was saved. What could she do? If people are to be saved because they are good, there could be no hope for her. She trusted in One that is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Yet she felt she had no time to lose; she did not delay, but immediately she bound the Scarlet Line in the window. Neither have you time to spare. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Now let the blood be the token of your safety. Flee to it for your life. Judgment is nigh. There is safety only in the blood.

But time rolled on; the two spies had returned to Joshua, and the people of Jericho went on again, undisturbed, with their business, their cares, or their pleasures; till behold the army of the Israelites came and encamped against Jericho. And when Rahab, from her window in the wall, looked out and saw the hosts of Israel marshalling on the plain, what must have been her thoughts? She must have shuddered, for judgment was near; but no, the Scarlet Line, bound firmly in the window, told her that she was safe. But her parents, her brethren, her sisters! what would become of them? She goes and entreats them to take refuge with her, where the Scarlet Line is the sure token of safety. What! *they* enter the house of a tainted harlot? *they* go under the roof of one who had been the cause to them of such shame—who had disgraced their family? And could she dare to talk of safety with *her?* Was it likely that God would select the house of a harlot as the only place of deliverance in the city, when there were so many good and respectable people in it—people who had never thus disgraced themselves—people whose lives had been moral, and decent, and upright? Oh how earnestly must Rahab, the poor outcast one, have pleaded! and yet with what confidence must she have pointed to her house as the only one to be spared, the only one that had the Scarlet Line. True, she had been an abandoned profligate; true, she had no good-

ness to rely on; therefore she relied on God. In his mercy, not on her merits (for she had none), was her trust. The token in the window, the Scarlet Line, told her all within its shelter were safe; and she knew if her parents trusted in the same God, if they believed what she had believed, then her deliverance was theirs; the same token would preserve them as herself. "Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in." There was no possibility of escape but that offered by Rahab; and humbled at being obliged to accept such a refuge, yet glad at the offered deliverance, they all took shelter where the Scarlet Line in the window witnessed that judgment was passed.

And so, dear reader, the blood of Jesus Christ tells us sad humbling truths as regards ourselves, though it tells us joyful news as regards God's mercy and love. It tells us that we are alike condemned as sinners before God, so that the poor degraded harlot is entitled to mercy as much as the most upright, decent, and moral. It tells us that the heart, the whole nature, the whole man—body, soul, and spirit, reason, understanding, all—is, in every individual, so corrupt, so filthy, so fallen, that nothing but the precious blood of God's own Son can enable the very best to stand guiltless before him; yea, and even that the very best stands in as much need of it as the most openly abandoned sinner on earth. It brings all down to one sad level

of ruin, guilt, and sin. It proves the fairest, the most lovely, to be as tainted and loathsome as the wretched harlot, who is abandoned and scorned by all. Do you want deliverance? Do you wish to escape from judgment? You must find it where it is alike open to the vilest and most worthless,—in the blood of Jesus Christ. Your life is forfeited, your inheritance is death and judgment; nothing can avail for your redemption, but seeing this guilt, this curse, this ruin, laid upon another.

But to proceed. Here then was the city of Jericho closely shut up—no escape from it, and the only place of safety in it, the house that had the Scarlet Line in the window. And what is the state of this world? It is like the city of Jericho, shut up for destruction. This world is but the condemned cell, in which sinners, found guilty before their Judge, are shut up for execution. The sentence has been already passed. Think not that there is any question with God as to whether man is guilty or not. The death of his Son long ago settled that. "We are all by nature children of wrath." "All the world is guilty before God." And what, then, does the world wait for? Not for condemnation, for it is judged already, but for *execution.* But still there is one house that is safe—one house that will not fall in the fearful ruin; a house made of living stones, sprinkled with the blood. All who trust in the precious blood of Christ compose that

household. Oh flee, then, and take refuge there! Soon, soon will this world reel to and fro, and totter like a drunken man: soon will the day of the Lord of hosts be here; and who shall be able to stand? But with this sudden, this fearful judgment hanging over them, what are men about? Why, they are like madmen, painting and decorating the walls of their condemned cell. Man so blinds his eyes to the future, so wilfully hides from himself the thought of death, which is all around him, and of the judgment that inevitably awaits him, that he takes pleasure in beautifying and adorning the very place that is to be his grave. He plants his garden, he builds his pleasant dwelling, he makes it fair and lovely to the eye, and forgets it is the condemned cell, in which he himself is waiting only for execution. And so it was with Jericho; the men of valour could look down from their lofty walls upon the little army of the Israelites, and could defy their attacks. Who could scale such high walls? Who could break open such massive gates? And no doubt, as day followed day, and they found there was no attempt made on the part of the Israelites to take the city, they became more settled and firm in their confidence; they thought themselves more secure than ever against their deadly foes. And so it is with the world: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Because God

has been long-suffering in his dealings with the earth, and has not visited upon man at once the full deserved judgment on account of his sins, therefore men take occasion to say, there is no judgment coming. And what did the Israelites do with respect to Jericho? They did not attempt to batter down the walls or break open the gates: no; quietly, at the command of God, they marched round outside the city for six days, bearing the ark of the Lord, and seven priests blowing seven trumpets of rams' horns. Thus they did once every day for six days: still all was strong and firm as ever in the city; not a stone was loosened from the walls. How must the people in the city have laughed and mocked at the seeming folly of the Israelites! How could a few priests, blowing a hoarse blast on rams' horns, hurt the city? Was this all the God of Israel could do? Was this all the judgment that had been threatened? And probably the greater part, after the first novelty of the thing was over, heeded it no more; but, just as usual, went about their daily business; or if, perhaps, the distant sound of the rams' horns caught their ear, sneered at the foolish Israelites who could thus vainly spend their time.

Dear reader, is not this the very picture of the world? Warning after warning has been sent to it *that the Lord is coming;* but it sounds in men's ears as but a foolish report. Indeed, so forgetful of it have men been, that it now seems a very strange, new

doctrine to many, that "the Lord is at hand." All have been slumbering; all have been glad to forget the fearful and unwelcome truth. But, nevertheless, the word of the Lord standeth sure. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Men may, indeed, deride and doubt the fact. The word of the Lord said, "there should come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But as the deluge, in the time of Noah, came suddenly upon the world, and all except the eight persons in the ark perished; so will the coming of the Lord overtake this world with sudden destruction, and there will be no escape: for, as it is again written, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7—9.)

So it is with the city of Jericho;—the six days had run their course—the seventh day came—again the priests, with rams' horns and the ark and the army, go round the city: but that day they did so seven times. The seventh time came—the priests blew the

last blast with the trumpets—"Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city ..... So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword..... And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein." Here was judgment the most fearful and sudden! Where was now the laugh and the scoffing at the Israelites? Where were now the walls that reached up to heaven, and the mighty men of valour? And such will be the destruction that will, like lightning, come upon this world. "The Lord himself will descend from heaven, with a shout." The last trump will sound. Clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and followed by the armies of heaven, he will smite the nations, and tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And when will this be? Will men see the judgment approaching? Will they be warned in time? No; the warning they have already had. They have heard the word of God concerning it; they have heard what to them seemed a foolish, feeble testimony about it, just as the men of Jericho heard the feeble blast of

rams' horns; but they have neglected it; they have despised it; they have disbelieved it. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven." "As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Each will, as usual, be about his accustomed business. The tradesman will be thinking as usual of his gain, the labourer of his toil, the idle man of his pleasures, the drunkard will be enjoying his glass, the profane person will have the oath upon his lips, the fornicator will be meditating on his lust; when, in a moment, each will be caught by the appearing of the Lord. And what a calm stillness of despair will then seize the busy noisy thousands of those who have perhaps a name to live, being called Christians, but are dead! What would a man then give for but one hour of his former life! Yes, men may deride now; men may bury their thoughts about the future in the present cares, and riches, and pleasures of this world; but that day will overtake them "as a thief in the night," and that day is surely, speedily drawing nigh. Dear reader, are you ready? are you prepared, washed, cleansed, safe from all this destruction? You hear people talk of the mercy of God. Sinners, careless about their souls, thoughtless

about Jesus, try to quiet their consciences by saying, "God is merciful; and if we do no wrong to our neighbour, and live a decent, sober life, he will not punish us like the rest of the wicked." But remember Jericho. Man, woman, child; the infant at the breast, and the hoary-headed old man, all alike perished at the Lord's command. It mattered not what their lives had been; no question was asked as to that; the only question was, Were they under the shelter of the Scarlet Line? Had they taken refuge there? God is indeed most merciful and gracious; he has given the blood of his own Son for guilty sinners—for a world that hates him; he points to *that* as the proof of his mercy and love. The sinner that has sought a refuge there is safe, *but no where else.* Those are always most ready to talk of the mercy of God, who are cherishing or allowing some secret sin—some darling lust; who are despising the precious blood of Christ, but who wish, if possible, to continue in their careless, thoughtless state, and yet try to persuade themselves that all will be right in the end.

But where was Rahab in the destruction? Her house was upon the wall, the very wall which tottered and fell down flat. And was she buried in the ruins? No; her house fell not, for there was the Scarlet Line in the window. When all reeled to and fro around, when crash after crash of the falling walls told her that the hour of vengeance was come, her house stood

firm. And the same One that preserved the harlot's house from ruin has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven; that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Have you, dear reader, rested on that "which cannot be shaken"—the word of the Lord? Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away." This is the only sure foundation.

Build upon the word of God; as the Lord Jesus himself said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." It is not merely hearing what God says, but believing it—acting therefore upon it. Rahab believed what she had heard, and therefore she acted accordingly. She bound the Scarlet Line in the window; she got her family into the house, and she and they were safe. And when the swords of the Israelites spared neither man, woman, nor child in the city, where were Rahab and her household? Safe with the camp of the Israelites. For Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she

had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel."

No destruction could fall upon Jericho, till the poor harlot had been removed far away from the danger. And so every guilty sinner that trusts in the blood of Jesus, be he who he may—vile, despised, loathsome even to himself; yet he is safe from judgment; he is loved with an everlasting love, and made an heir of glory, a joint-heir with Christ. And when this world and the works that are therein shall be burnt up, he will be peacefully and joyfully singing the song in glory, "Worthy is the Lamb, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Dear reader, "the time is short!" "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Surrounded by myriads of glorious saints, Jesus will soon appear. And forming one of that bright, and joyful, and triumphing band, will there be the once despised harlot of Jericho; one who has well known what it is to have been a sinner—one who well knows what it is to be saved by the blood of the Lamb.

May you also be there; alike freed from all condemnation; alike washed in his precious blood; alike crowned with light and joy unfading!

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

"OUTLIVED HER USEFULNESS."

Not till the dark waves of Jordan
Shall close on the steps that have passed:
Not till the portals of heaven
Shall welcome the ransomed at last;

Not till I join in the chorus,
That sounds o'er the "crystal sea,"
May I cease to be striving and praying
That others may enter with me.

We were riding along very slowly, with the solemn measured tread which compels reflection. She, whose dust we were reverently depositing in peaceful rest, was an aged Christian. For many years she had been foremost in every work of love and mercy. Generous, untiring, and self-sacrificing, she had passed a long life of usefulness in her family and in the church that she loved. Years of infirmity and helplessness followed, and for many weary months those hands which had ministered so cheerfully unto others, could not supply her own slightest need. And then her change came.

"What a devoted Christian she was, years ago!" was remarked; "but she has long *outlived her usefulness.* I have often wondered why such old people live. Such a one as Mrs. J——, for instance, so perfectly helpless. She was prepared to die, we know, and yet she must have been weary of so burdensome a life."

"Did she ever express herself as being weary of life?" I asked.

"Oh! no, she was as patient as a lamb. If I were to be ill a long time, I should think it was intended o teach me patience. But she did not need such a discipline."

"And her family?"

"It may have benefitted them. Mary has waited upon her grandmother so long that she has grown like her, and has become a most lovely character, so gentle and self-denying."

"Did she retain her eyesight sufficiently to read?"

"For several years past she has been quite blind. As her grandchildren would come in, she would ask them to read a single verse of the Bible, and which of the most thoughtless would refuse so small a request? Then she would in her quiet way make such varied, such beautiful application of this one text. It was a precious commentary. I think that they will never forget some of them. I know that she spent much of her time in prayer."

"Do you suppose she is praying now?"

"Certainly not. Her prayers are ended. We read of praises in heaven, but of no intercessions except those of Christ."

"Has her family been blessed apparently?"

"All her children are in the church. Her eldest son living is our most active elder, and just before her death she heard of the conversion of two of her grandsons at the West, who had been in situations of peculiar temptation."

"Do you think she remembered the church?"

"If you had known her, you would not ask that.

Her church was as dear unto her as the apple of her eye. She spent many a long hour in her sleepless nights in asking for blessings on the church, when the rest of the congregation were sleeping."

"Just now you wondered why God in his providence protracted the life of aged Christians, when their days of active usefulness were over. And yet it seems evident, that in this case it was the means of teaching patience, gentleness, a knowledge of the Scriptures, and that in answer to her prayers many of her family have been hopefully converted. No effectual fervent prayer of the righteous is ever lost. As this life is the only season for prayer, hers may have been protracted for this express purpose. For many generations, for aught you or I can tell, blessings temporal and spiritual may be granted in answer to the prayers of that helpless, bed-ridden Christian."

Said the angel of the covenant unto one who had wrestled with him all night, "As a prince hast thou power with God and hast prevailed." Are there now no princes in prayer, like him who strove at Peniel? None now, who wrestle not one night only, but through long years of infirmity and suffering it may be, yet of cherished communion with God, whose prayers presented "in the golden vial" by an Almighty Advocate, are poured back in priceless benedictions?

Let us try to realize that not one day of weariness will be given to the maturest saint, that is not necessary; not one sigh breathed that has not its errand. The servant of Christ need never be useless, under any circumstances, in any place, alone, on a bed of weakness, shut out from the world, deaf even, while

the heart can beat with love to a dying world, or conscious thought rise to the mercy-seat.

We should shine till the last, and the brighter at the last. The nearer we draw to the Sun of Righteousness, the clearer should become our reflection of his loveliness and glory.

"*Outlived his usefulness!*" Never let such a sentence be uttered by a Christian.

A lady was urging a man in middle life to enter once more a Sunday-school, where he had formerly assisted, and where his services were greatly needed.

He declined. "I have taught for twenty years; I have served my time."

"Then your experience will be all the more valuable," was suggested.

He persisted in refusing, adding conclusively, that "his work was done."

The next Sabbath they met in the vestibule of the church. As he greeted her she said, quietly:

"I did not expect to see you here."

"Ah! why not?"

"You told me the last time I saw you, that your work was done. Now I always supposed that when our work was all done, the Master would send for us. So I supposed you had gone to your reward."

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JUSTIFICATION.

By the Rev. T. S. Childs, D.D.

There is no subject more important to a person who has sinned than that of justification. It is connected with everything of deep and permanent interest to him here and hereafter. It is connected with his peace. Being justified by faith we have peace with God.* It is connected with his salvation. Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.† It is connected with his final glory. Whom he justified them he also glorified.‡ Neither peace, nor salvation, nor glory, can come to any man unless he is a justified man.

The doctrine of justification is, then, as Luther declared it, the doctrine of a standing or a falling church. The great mission of the Reformation was to clear this doctrine of the rubbish in which the superstition and wickedness of ages had imbedded it; and one of the most decisive steps in the progress of the Papal apostasy was taken when, in the Council of Trent, the scriptural doctrine of justification was formally and finally rejected.

This doctrine, in what may be termed its new life, was born in the agonies of the church; it was baptized in the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. As it lives, the church lives; as it fades away, the vitality and power of the church decline.

* Rom. v. 1. † Rom. v. 9. ‡ Rom. viii. 30.

What the doctrine is to the church it is to the individual. It is the article of a standing or a falling hope—of a saved or an unsaved soul.

With all this, we apprehend that the views even of many who claim to be justified, are not so clear and definite upon this subject as to preclude all necessity for its examination. One needs no very extensive experience to learn that the conceptions of many, as to the ground of their hope of salvation, are painfully vague and unsatisfactory. This could not be so if the doctrine of justification was clearly apprehended. It is a serious question, therefore, whether this doctrine is not losing somewhat of its clearness and vital force among us; whether there is not much obscurity in reference to the fundamental questions, What is it for a sinner to be justified? and, How is he justified?

These are the two inquiries which it is proposed now to answer; and may the Spirit of all truth be our guide.

I. *What is it for a sinner to be justified? or, what is justification?*

We reply, first, it is not to be sanctified or made holy. Justification and sanctification are very distinct things, though always connected in the same person. Justification is the act of God declaring the sinner free from the condemnation of the law, and entitled to eternal life: sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit making the sinner pure. Justification is the work of an instant: sanctification is the work of a life-time. Justification removes the penalty of the law: sanctification removes the pollution of sin. Justification gives a title to heaven: sanctification fits for

heaven. Justification introduces us to the privileges of the children of God: sanctification gives us the character of children. "Our children," says an old writer, "the day they are born, are as much our children as they are ever after; but they are many years growing up into a state of manhood. Thus a king's first-born son is heir-apparent to the crown, whilst lying in the cradle: after-growth adds nothing to his title; but it does to his fitness to govern." So "our right to heaven comes not in at the door of our sanctification, but at that of our justification; but our meetness for heaven does."

Another remark to be made is, that in justification sin is not ignored, or passed by uncared for. Justification abolishes neither sin, nor the justice of God. Both abide, and both have their full and perfect power. The awful truth that lies at the very basis of justification is, that sin, in its own nature, and in its relation to the justice of God, must be punished. The wages of sin is death. This is the inevitable, the eternal law. From this there is no appeal.

This, so far from being a gloomy fact, is, to the justified, a ground of unspeakable consolation. If our sins were left out of the account in the present dealings of God with us, what assurance could there be that they might not, in some future crisis of our history, be brought in again? If there is no definite, and just, and final disposition made of them, what ground can there be for any permanent peace or hope to a sinful soul? We must know what has become of our sins, if we would know what is to become of ourselves.

This knowledge is reached when we come to con-

sider, affirmatively, what it is for a sinner to be justified, or what justification is.

To justify is to pronounce just, or conformed to law. This is its common usage. A man justifies himself in regard to any course when he declares that course right, or conformed to the law that should govern it. A court justifies an accused person when it pronounces him innocent. The decision does not, of itself, change his personal character. It is simply the declaration of law, that no charge is sustained against him, and he is entitled to be treated as an innocent man. He may not be personally innocent; but the law has justified him, and he goes forth to claim the rights and enjoy the benefits of that justification.

The justification of a sinner is the declaration of God as judge, that he regards, and will treat him, as if he were not a sinner, but a righteous man. It is not a declaration that he is personally a holy man; nor does the act of justification make him a holy man. The very forms of expression show this, as they do also the meaning of the term. Thus it is expressly said that God "justifieth the *ungodly*." Nothing is more familiar to readers of the Scripture than the frailties and sins of the justified. Being justified by faith they have peace; yet they find a law that when they would do good, evil is present with them. It is, therefore, not the holy but the unholy; not the godly but the ungodly who are justified. All our hope and all our peace turn upon the apprehension of this. Justification—that which alone brings rest to the restless soul, which silences the storms of conscience, which brings us fearlessly into the presence of a reconciled God, which opens the gates of heaven and

gives us assurance of rest and glory there—this justification is of the *ungodly*. It is God declaring the *sinner* just.

This, as we understand it, is scriptural justification. It is the meaning of the term in itself. It is its meaning as shown by its contrast, *condemnation*. It is the meaning which the evangelical church has, with remarkable unanimity, placed upon the term.

It is hardly necessary to add that this includes much more in its results than the pardon of sin. It involves all that belongs to a perfectly righteous man. One has a very dim conception of the glorious nature of a sinner's justification before God if he limits it by the idea of pardon. Pardon only remits the punishment of sin. Justification gives glory, and honour, and immortality. Pardon saves from hell. Justification raises to heaven. Doubtless it is a great thing for a sinner to be forgiven. It is a far greater for him to be justified.

This, then, is the answer to our first question, What is it for a sinner to be justified? It is not for him to be sanctified, or made holy; it is not to have his sins ignored, or passed by unpunished, and unatoned for; it is not for him simply to be pardoned; but it is for him, although a sinner still, to be pronounced and treated by God as if he were not a sinner, but a righteous man.

Now we are met by the question, How can these things be? Is not every man, in fact, a sinner? How, then, can God treat him as if he were not a sinner? Especially he being a sinner still, before he is sanctified or made better, how is it possible that he can be regarded as sinless?

II. This opens our second inquiry, namely, *How is a sinner justified?*

The answer is given abundantly in the Scriptures. We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* By him (Christ) all that believe are justified.† A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.‡

In these, as well as in a multitude of similar passages, we are struck by the fact, that justification appears to be ascribed to several sources. It is said to be by grace, by the redemption of Christ, and by faith.

These three statements are not contradictory. Justification is by grace; it is by the redemption of Christ; it is by faith. The relation of these, however, is very different; a difference that has sometimes been expressed by the terms *cause, ground,* and *instrument* or *means;* at other times by the expressions *moving cause, meritorious cause,* and *instrumental cause,* &c.

The first inquiry is as to the relation of grace to justification.

Grace is favour to the ill-deserving. Justification is by grace, because it is a gift utterly unmerited by those to whom it is given. It is a blessing bestowed upon those who deserve a curse. Grace in God was the foundation, the original source, of the whole series of events connected with justification. Grace originated the plan of deliverance for sinners. Grace provided the redemption of Christ. Grace secures the faith that apprehends Christ. Grace upholds the believing soul through the whole of its earthly conflict

* Rom. iii. 24. † Acts xiii. 39. ‡ Rom. iii. 28.

and suffering; and grace crowns the conflict and the suffering with the rewards of heaven. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son: By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,—these are the voices in which the believer delights to recognize the glorious grace of God in all the work of his salvation; and to which he answers back in the church's hymn of praise—

"Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace first inscribed my name
In God's Eternal Book;
'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.

Grace led my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

Secondly: Justification is by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The ground, or, as the old theologians were accustomed to say, the meritorious cause, of our justification is the righteousness of Christ. There is no justification, or declaring righteous, with God, unless there is a righteousness which furnishes a real and substantial ground for such declaration.

The law of God demands of all under it a perfect

obedience; if violated, it demands a perfect satisfaction. Only on these conditions can there be justification. Here the work of Christ meets the demands of the law, and the wants of the sinner. He has magnified the law and made it honourable. He has perfectly obeyed it. He has endured its penalty. He was obedient unto death. This is his righteousness. This is the ground of the justification of every man that is justified. This righteousness imputed to the sinner, or set to his account, furnishes a complete ground in justice for the sinner's justification. As the sins of the sinner were set down to Christ's account, and he, though personally holy, was treated as if he were a sinner, so now the obedience and suffering of Christ are set down to the account of the sinner, and he, though personally unholy, is regarded and treated as if he were innocent. This is the simple statement, as we apprehend it, of the plan of redemption. This is the obvious explanation of the multitude of Scripture passages that are burdened with the love of God in Christ. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* He who knew no sin has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.† He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.‡ He has borne our sins in his own body on the tree.§ Surely language cannot more strongly express the fact that the sinless Son of God

* See Is. liii. † 2 Cor. v. 21. ‡ Gal. iii. 13. § 1 Pet. ii. 24.

manifest in the flesh, has, in the awful justice of God, been treated as a sinner, that sinners might be treated as righteous.

In harmony with this view, we understand the language of the Scriptures, when it "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."* And when it declares that, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."† In harmony with this, too, we understand the experience of the Apostle when he counted all things loss that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."‡

In harmony with this, also, is the view which the great body of the evangelical church have taken of the teachings of the Holy Spirit on this subject. This doctrine has been the warp and woof of Christian experience. It has twined itself into the confessions, the prayers, the praises, and the dying testimony of the people of God in all ages.

One might as well attempt to remove Christ himself from the history and life of the church, as to remove the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. There is no question in regard to the position this doctrine held in the minds and hearts of the Reformers, and their successors in

* Rom. iv. 6. † Rom. v. 18, 19. ‡ Phil. iii. 8, 9.

the faith. With one accord they maintained it. The Confessions of France and Germany; of Holland and Britain; of Cambridge and Saybrook, in New England, all, all, with one voice, enunciate this great article of the Christian faith. "There was as much agreement," says an able writer, "among the Reformed churches for more than two hundred years from the days of Luther and Calvin, in receiving this doctrine as that of the divinity of Christ, or the personality of the Holy Ghost."*

Now while, as thoroughly as any, we recognize the Scriptures alone as the ultimate standard of appeal, we are not ashamed to confess that we should hesitate long before venturing, upon our private responsibility, to reject a doctrine into the firm belief of which the great mass of those who have been taught of God have been led. We should consider that common modesty required us to admit that they whose piety, and faith, and love to God, were at least equal to ours, would be as likely to be guided into the truth as we. And when we saw the great body of God's elect against us, we should need evidence as clear as that which shone round about the Apostle, to convince us that they were wrong and we were right. When such men as Calvin, and Luther, and Knox, and Latimer, and Hooker, and Leighton, and Owen, and Charnock, and Bates, and Bunyan, and Robinson, and Shepard, and Edwards, and Chalmers,—men who have bathed in the depths of the word and Spirit of God—when such men as these solemnly assure us that they can understand the word of God only as teaching the justification of the

* See Plumer's "Grace of Christ," published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

sinner on the ground of the righteousness of Christ imputed unto him; and when, in the hour that tries the sincerity of all faith—the hour of death—they gather the whole of their eternal hope, and plant it in silent awe, or in triumphant rapture, upon this doctrine, we envy not the man who can sneer it away as an absurdity.

Courts of law often consider the evidence of men in the article of death equivalent to that taken under oath. The presumption is, that the solemnity of such an hour will bind men to the truth no less powerfully than the formalities of any earthly tribunal. And the testimony of the cloud of witnesses, who have passed in the clear and calm faith of the resurrection of the just, has been, We go in the strength of the Lord God; we make mention of his righteousness, even of his only.

Thirdly: It remains to consider the office of faith in justification. We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

The source, or original fountain of justification, is the grace of God—his purpose of mercy to the sinful, the lost, the helpless, the unworthy. The ground of justification, that *for* which justification can be granted, the precise thing on account of which a sinner can be regarded and treated as if he had never sinned, is, the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—his work and suffering in the place of his people. God hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Now the simple work of faith is *to take hold of his righteousness*. Faith just receives Christ, and receiv-

ing him, it receives, of course, his righteousness. Thus it receives the full ground of his justification. It is in this way that faith justifies; not as a work; not as an equivalent to righteousness; not as being taken by God in place of righteousness; but merely as laying hold of, and bringing to the soul, the righteousness of Christ.

This, therefore, indicates the *object* of faith. It is Christ—his person and his work. Faith believes in Christ as the Son of God, as God manifest in the flesh, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. The divinity, the incarnation, the sinless life, the sacrificial death of the Son of God—these are the truths to which faith turns, on which she rests, and in which she rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There is no merit in faith; but it lays hold upon that which is infinitely meritorious. There is no saving power in faith itself; but it takes hold of a divine Saviour. It is the gift of God to bring us to God. It is the soul's thrill under the touch of the Almighty. It is the cry of the spirit answering back the creating voice of the Holy Ghost. It is the soul's grasp of Christ as, stepping from the grave at his command, she puts her hand in his to be led whithersoever he goeth. This is the faith which justifies the sinner; and by which being justified, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This view of justification accords with the admirable and familiar definition of our standards, in which the whole subject may be gathered up: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight,

only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

If this is a correct exhibition of the doctrine, the inferences from it are obvious and solemn. First, we see how unwise, how unscriptural, and how perilous, are the directions sometimes given to awakened souls. The question such a soul wants answered is, "How can man be justified with God?" And this question is not answered truly, or safely, by telling the soul baldly to "submit to God,"—to "come into harmony with God,"—to "view God as a creator, and sovereign, and bow at his feet." God as a creator and sovereign is a consuming fire. It is not in this form the sinner wants to see him; it is not in this form he can bear him; and, it is a glorious fact, it is not in this form he is presented in the gospel as the ground of the sinner's hope of salvation. The peculiar aspect in which he appears, as he calls to his side the weary and heavy-laden, and gives them rest, is, not as creator and sovereign; but as the *justifier of the ungodly*. God *is* the creator and sovereign; and every renewed soul joyfully recognizes this; but it affords no hope to one agonizing with the question, "What must I do to be saved?" That question is not answered by sending the soul shivering and alone into the presence of a sovereign God.

Nor is it answered by telling the trembling inquirer to read, and pray, and labour, and will; to resolve, and reform; to determine to be a Christian; to do the best he can and leave the rest with God. These things the true penitent will do; but not as qualifications for his acceptance with God. He who comes acceptably to God comes with no such price in his

hand. The whole tenor of the gospel to those out of Christ is, first, not submit, nor resolve, nor reform, nor read, nor pray, nor wait; but first of all, and at once, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved.

The turning point of everything in a sinner's welfare is justification. He that is justified is safe. He that is unjustified is lost. Now it is a very impressive fact that the Scriptures never say we are justified by submission, by resolution, by reformation, by doing the best we can, by prayer, nor by love itself, but by *faith*.

It becomes, therefore, a matter of vital importance to those who dispense the word, to be cautious upon this point. To talk at random here; to talk without clear ideas, is to hazard the most solemn interests that can be hazarded on earth. If a sinner is justified by the grace of God, through faith in the redemption of Christ Jesus, then he is not justified in any other way. To rest short of this, to rest upon anything else besides this, is to perish: and to lead a sinner to rest upon anything else than this, is to lead him to perdition. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost; and this is the name whereby he is called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Wo to the soul whose hope of life beyond the grave does not stand in the vicarious obedience and suffering of the Son of Man! Wo, alas, to him who has been taught to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ in any other righteousness than that wrought out by him who of God has been made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption!

If there be in life a moment of unutterable solem-

nity, it is when one is called to direct a dying sinner to the way of peace. There is no time now for empirical schemes. There is no time for vague directions. Eternity hangs on the moment. Who, now, by word or sign, shall dare turn the closing eye from the One only object of faith? The smitten Israelite looked upon the brazen serpent and lived. The dying sinner looks upon the Lamb of God, and believing, lives. This, this, in life and in death, is the object of faith. The clear, calm voice that rose from Bethabara, that was heard in the prison of Philippi, that has been echoed by the church in every step of her sublime course among the nations, is that which, to-day, and to the end, is to be proclaimed as the only hope of the sinful and the lost—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Secondly: This doctrine shows the strength of the ground on which the believer stands. It lays the foundation for a solid, Scriptural, permanent peace. Meeting at once the demands of justice and of conscience, it gives lasting rest by resolving for ever the one urgent and overshadowing problem of a lost humanity; How can God be just and yet justify the ungodly? This question practically settled, the destiny of life is settled. He that is justified, is justified for ever. He hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation. The weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest. It is not the strength of his faith that saves him; but the strength of that Saviour in whom he has trusted, and in whose righteousness he is clothed. The feeblest child is as truly a child as the strongest. To all who are in Christ the

assurance is given that there is now no condemnation. The curse has passed to return no more. The bitter penal cup has been drained. An everlasting righteousness has been brought in, which is unto all and upon all them that believe.

It is a consolatory thought that the righteousness which believers now have in Christ far exceeds that lost by the fall. This can never be lost. It is Christ's righteousness, and must abide perfect and efficacious while Christ himself remains. Received, it shall cover all your sin; it shall secure you now and hereafter from condemnation; it shall present you faultless before the presence of God with exceeding joy. Let those to whom this righteousness has been imputed not be ashamed. It may be rejected; it may be trodden under foot; it may be laughed to scorn; but the day is coming which shall reveal to both receivers and rejectors "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."

In the meantime it behooves those who have been made partakers of this blessedness, to confirm the evidence which the whole history of this doctrine has furnished, that it tends to holiness as well as to peace. The justification of the sinner is not the justification of his sin. The faith which receives Christ works by love, and purifies the heart. Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. This is the law of the Christian life. Its working is inevitable. He that is justified by grace cannot sin that grace may abound.

Thirdly: To the unjustified we have only to say, whatever hope of life there may be for you in the dispensation of grace lies here: "Justified *freely*." No-

thing more can be offered. If you are ever saved you must be justified; and if you are justified it must be freely. No duties, no sacrifices, no prayers, no purposes, no penitential tears, can save you.

> "The death of Christ shall still remain
> Sufficient and alone."

And surely, if you are wise, you will ask no other way than this. Is it not enough that justification is free, by the grace of God, through the redemption of Christ Jesus? Is it not enough that the most depraved, and miserable, and helpless of sinners may be justified by faith without the deeds of the law? Is it not enough that Jesus stands and cries, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will GIVE you rest?"

Will you come? Will you take this rest as a gift? Will you receive the righteousness of Christ without money and without price? Or, being still ignorant of God's righteousness, will you press on in the vain and mad attempt to establish your own righteousness, and perish in the effort?

Do you say you cannot believe? We can only point you to him who is "the author and finisher of faith," and say, "Behold the Lamb of God." Do you say you cannot repent? We can only point you to him who "has been exalted to give repentance to Israel," and say, "Except ye repent ye must perish: but, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." We can do no more. It is not for us to cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. We cannot comfort you with a hope that shall perish when God takes away your soul. Your case *is* fearful; and,

alas for you, if you are led to believe otherwise. But Christ came to call not the righteous but *sinners* to repentance. As a sinner, lay hold upon this final hope. There is no other. Lay, by faith, your sins upon Christ. Take, by faith, his righteousness to yourself. This you are welcome to do. This you must do or you are lost!

RELIANCE ON CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.

Now for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain, I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross.

Yes, and I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake;
Oh may my soul be found in Him,
And of his righteousness partake.

The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne,
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.

CHRIST THE LAMB SLAIN.

Behold the sin-atoning Lamb,
With wonder, gratitude, and love;
To take away our guilt and shame,
See Him descending from above!

Our sins and griefs on him were laid;
He meekly bore the mighty load;
Our ransom-price he fully paid,
In groans and tears, in sweat and blood.

To save a guilty world, he dies;
Sinners, behold the bleeding Lamb!
To him lift up your longing eyes,
And hope for mercy in his name.

Pardon and peace through him abound;
He can the richest blessings give;
Salvation in his name is found,
He bids the dying sinner live.

Jesus, my Lord, I look to thee;
Where else can helpless sinners go?
Thy boundless love shall set me free
From all my wretchedness and woe.

WONDERS OF REDEMPTION.

Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,
We wretched sinners lay,
Without one cheerful beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day.

With pitying eyes the Prince of grace
Beheld our helpless grief;
He saw, and, O amazing love!
He ran to our relief.

Down from the shining seats above,
With joyful haste he fled,
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,
And dwelt among the dead.

He spoiled the powers of darkness thus,
And brake our iron chains;
Jesus has freed our captive souls
From everlasting pains.

Oh! for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak.

No. 269.

ESCAPE!

OR

A FRIENDLY WARNING.

By the Rev. WILLIAM J. McCORD,
Wassaic, N. Y.

Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.—Gen. xix. 17.

These earnest words were addressed to Lot to hasten his escape from Sodom. He was disposed to linger, and the angels laid hold upon his hand and brought him forth, and set him without the city, and said, Escape for thy life. Gen. xviii. xix.

Escape! This was *the only safe course.* Sodom was about to be destroyed. Lot was in danger. He was told to escape; and he did so. This is the course man instinctively pursues when sensible that he is exposed. When he feels that his life is in danger, he flees for safety. This is reasonable and right; this is wise and safe. And does not wisdom suggest the same when *the soul* is in danger? If men are in danger, should they not escape? Escape for thy life!

Escape? Yes; yes; for sinners *are* in danger. This was the condition of Lot. He must escape or be consumed; and it is just so with sinful men. It was not always so, for man was not always a sinner. He was created holy. Before the fall he had nothing to

fear. No storm of wrath then threatened to overwhelm him. His sky was then serene and bright; his prospects were unclouded. He could view the past without regret, and the future without alarm. But he has sinned; and as a sinner he is condemned. He is exposed to the curse of God's broken law. He is threatened with everlasting punishment. These threatenings will be executed. The curse will fall upon him if he do not repent; if he believe not, he must be for ever damned. He is in such a condition—he is in such a state of sin, and misery, and condemnation—that he must escape from it, or be destroyed. Living and dying as he is, unrenewed and unforgiven, he must drink to the very dregs the cup of God's indignation and wrath. Such, beloved reader, is your condition. You are a sinner, guilty, condemned, exposed. If you continue in your present state, you must perish. There is no help for it! You must flee or die! Your safety requires your immediate flight. Flee now! Escape for thy life! For thy life! Escape!

ESCAPE! *A place of refuge is provided* to which you may flee. Lot was commanded to flee to the mountain. There he would be safe. So sinners have a place of safety pointed out to them. There is a refuge.

> "The voice of free grace cries, Escape to the mountain;
> For Adam's lost race Christ hath opened a fountain."

The sinner has not provided the refuge for himself. This he could never do. None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever. Ps. xlix. 7, 8. Nor

was God under any obligation to do it. Justly might he have left man to die in his sins and perish for ever. But he has pitied. He has provided salvation. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 16. Christ the Son of God is the refuge. Yes,

"This Saviour died to have us
Reconciled in him to God."

He shed his blood for the remission of sins. And this, beloved reader, this is the refuge to which you may flee. The way is open. And you need not doubt being received: for he says, Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. John vi. 37. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Heb. vii. 25. He came into the world to save sinners; he came to seek and to save the lost. Luke xix. 10. Then escape for thy life! Jesus is ready to receive you. Escape! Flee from ruin! Flee to the arms of Christ! Escape!

ESCAPE! For *due warning is given* of your danger and of the refuge. It was so with Lot; it is so with you. He was warned! so are you. Flee! Escape!

ESCAPE! Hear the warnings. God has given *his word* for our instruction and admonition. This teaches our sinfulness and declares our exposure. It tells us of our danger. It acquaints us with the plan of redemption. It points out the way to heaven. It speaks of sin and of forgiveness. It reveals Jesus Christ. It is able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. iii. 15. It points out our danger, our refuge, our hope, and our doom if

disobedient, so plainly that none need err. God speaks to us in his word and warns us there. There you are warned. Reader, listen! Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! God speaks *by his providence*. He rules over all. He orders all. And in all his hand is seen and his voice is heard. By merciful providences he speaks to us, for the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. Rom. ii. 4. By afflictive providences he speaks, for when his judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Isa. xxvi. 9. Every judgment of God, as well as every mercy, is a warning, and cries, Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! *The preaching of the gospel* gives us warnings as well as invitations. Earnest messages from God come to us through the living ministry. Our Christian friends, too, speak to us in the name of God. They warn and entreat us; they beseech us to become reconciled. As Lot spake to his sons-in-law, saying, Up, get ye out of this place, so our friends often address us.

> "They point us to the coming wrath,
> And warn us from that wrath to flee."

They weep over our sinfulness and indifference; they have great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart because of us their kinsmen according to the flesh; their heart's desire and prayer to God is that we may be saved. Rom. ix. 1–3; x. 1. Hence their warnings. We should remember that God is thus speaking to us through our friends; and let us beware lest we despise him that speaketh. Reader, when your friends speak to you about your soul, it is

God's voice, saying to you, Flee from the wrath to come! Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! For God speaks to you *by his Spirit.* He convinces of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. John xvi. 8–11. How often has he spoken to you! Again he speaks, saying, Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! In these various ways you are warned. Your danger and your refuge are made known; and if you perish, it may be truly said of you,

"He knew his duty, but he did it not."

This you must always feel, and it will add bitterness to the cup of your torment. Then why will you die? Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! Yes, escape! For in obedience to the warnings given, sinners should *immediately* escape to Christ. Lot was urged to escape for his life; so are sinners. Their souls are in jeopardy. While lingering in their present state, destruction may at any moment overwhelm them. Though they linger, their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 2 Pet. ii. 3. And yet the sinner is disposed to linger, like Lot in Sodom. His heart is so attached to the world and to his sins, that,

"Fond of these trifling toys,
His soul can neither fly, nor go,
To reach eternal joys."

He will not strive to enter in at the strait gate; he will not come to Christ that he may have life. Luke xiii. 24; John v. 40. O reader, how differently you should act! You should escape for your life from the danger which surrounds and threatens you!

ESCAPE! For sinners *should not stop nor rest short of Christ.* Said the angel to Lot, Escape for thy life;

look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. But as Lot wished to turn aside unto Zoar, so men are disposed to stop short of Christ. They do not like to renounce self and give up every false dependence, and rely wholly on Christ, and trust only in his righteousness. They stop short of this. They rest often on some outward reformation, and trust in their morality or their works. This will never do. There is but one refuge. There must be an unreserved surrender of yourself and your all to Christ. You must depend on him alone for acceptance with God. You must apply to the physician, or you cannot be healed. You must wash in the fountain opened, or you cannot be clean. You must eat the bread of life, or perish with hunger. You must drink the living water, or die. You must go to Christ, if you would be saved. You must enter the refuge, if you would be safe. You must escape to the mountain, if you would not be consumed. Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! Lot had his *objections*. He not only lingered, but he would turn aside. He said of Zoar, This city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither: is it not a little one? Gen. xix. 20. So with sinners. Instead of fleeing directly to Christ and forsaking every forbidden indulgence, they linger about the city of destruction; they make their excuses, and plead for their little sins. This or that they wish to indulge, and they say, Is it not a little one? Reader, beware of what are called little sins. They are deadly flies that spoil the ointment; the little foxes that destroy the vines. Eccl. ix. 1; Sol. Song ii. 15. They are as ruinous in their con-

sequences as great sins. It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Gal. iii. 10. He that offends in one point is guilty of all. Jas. ii. 10. Lot fled from Zoar; so, reader, you must cease your excuses, and flee to Christ; and every sin, great and small, every sin must be forsaken by those who come to Christ. You cannot have Christ and your sins. If you would have Christ, you must forsake your sins; you must repent of them and forsake them, and receive and rest upon Christ alone for acceptance with God. You must not stop short of Christ. You must go quite to the cross. None but Jesus can save. His is the only name. Acts iv. 12. Flee to him. Escape for thy life! ESCAPE! The one who sets out in a religious course should *never look back*, never regret it, never turn back. Never! The command to Lot was, Look not behind thee! You know the fate of his wife. She looked back, and became a pillar of salt. Remember Lot's wife! It is written, If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Heb. x. 38, 39. Draw not back. Haste thee! Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! Are you *about to commence* the Christian race? Look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. xii. 1, 2. Trust in him and walk in his steps. Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. iii. 14. Run with patience the race set before you, and be not weary nor faint in your mind. Heb. xii. 1–3. Endure unto

the end, and you shall be saved. Matt. x. 22. Look not behind you; never regret the vows of allegiance made to God; never turn back from following Christ, remembering that you must "fight if you would reign." Then struggle on. Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! For if sinners do not flee to Christ, they must be destroyed. Had not Lot fled, he must have been consumed in the iniquity of the place; so if sinners do not repent and embrace Jesus Christ, and thus make their peace with God, they shall, they must, perish. He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. xxix. 1. Reader, destruction is before thee! Escape for thy life!

ESCAPE! Lot obeyed, fled, and was preserved. So, reader, if you will listen to the warnings given you, repent, turn unto God, and embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered to you in the gospel, you shall be saved and have eternal life. But refuse, and God only knows how soon you may be in hell with the guilty Sodomites! For they are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude 7. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16. There is danger. You are warned. Flee! Escape for thy life! *Escape!* ESCAPE! ESCAPE!

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No. 270.

THE FAITH OF DEVILS.

The devils believe and tremble.—Jas. ii. 19.

The human race appears to live in a melancholy state of infatuation. In nothing is this fact more clearly visible than in the strange incongruity that exists between their lives and the principles by which they profess to be actuated.

This is especially true in matters pertaining to the soul. Professing belief, they exhibit the recklessness of unbelief. Denying the existence of devils, they live as if allied to them. Declaring their faith in the existence of God, they live as if there were no God to love or to fear. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Rom. i. 22.) What more common than to hear men rail against the doctrines of Holy Writ, and yet endeavour to exculpate themselves by saying, "I believe in a great and good God!" They boast of their belief; and while they boast, blaspheme. Repudiating the idea of punish ment, they hasten to deserve it. Denying Divine justice, they invoke its thunders. Rejecting the fear of hell, they rush into it. Strange conduct! Wondrous and mysterious infatuation! O foolish sinner, who has fascinated you, that you should not obey the truth? What is the value of a faith disconnected from obedience? In what are you better than the devils? Compare your conduct with theirs.

"The devils believe"—they have a faith, a faith

which acts, which is seen in its effects. They "trem ble." They believe, I say. They believe in the exist ence of one God. They are not, they cannot be, atheists. They are conscious that "Heaven admits no jests."

Nor is their belief merely an abstract idea of exist ence; it involves the idea of the attributes of a Being in whom is embodied all that they conceive of as essential to Deity, and that multiplied by infinity. They believe in the *wisdom* of God, for it has often baffled their hell-born scheme for man's destruction. They believe in this *power*, for they feel it in their clanking chains and fiery vestments. They have seen the sinner wrested from their grasp, and the spoiler carried captive. They believe in the *holiness* of God. They have heard the acclamations of angels, cherubim and seraphim in glory. They marked the life of Jesus, and acknowledged his holiness. "We know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God," was their public tes timony. They believe in the *justice* of God. With them it is more than mere "hypothesis." They feel its pains and penalties now, and know that they are "re served in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." They believe in the *good ness* of God. They have seen it in the gift of his Son, in the whole plan of redemption, in which are exhi bited both his mercy and his love. They believe the *truth* of God. The first fruit of the harvest of misery God threatened them with, is already theirs. They have an earnest of its fulfilment in every pang of hopeless torment.

Now what is the effect of this belief? They "*tremble.*" And well they may. Theirs is a shore-

less sea of misery, a fathomless gulf of despair, a boundless expanse of agonizing woe.

They "*tremble.*" And well they may, under the withering curse of an angry God, and with no mediator to reconcile them to him. They writhe in the folds of a serpent, the poison of whose sting will rankle in their wounded spirit for ever. They are shrouded eternally in torment, the smoke of which they are conscious will ascend for ever. They are already subject to the gnawing of the worm that "dieth not." They are already consuming in a fire that shall "never be quenched." They grope already in that outer darkness in which there is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." Their souls are already manacled in the gyves of "Eternal Justice," untempered by mercy. They have entered upon a night that will know no dawn; they are the subjects of a burning thirst, that will never be allayed; the objects of a wrath that "abideth" for ever. Their cup of trembling will be eternally full, though eternally drained to the dregs.

Do you wonder that they tremble? Is it a matter of surprise that they quail before such an array of terrors, and in view of an increase in the degree of their punishment? No wonder they asked the Saviour, "Art thou come to torment us *before the time?*" No wonder they deprecate the coming evil. They have no Saviour provided for them. No advocate to plead their cause! Is not the trembling a necssary fact?

Would not the wonder be greater if they were indifferent? And yet men—godless, careless, wicked, rebellious men—seem to ignore these fearful realities.

Shame! sinner! shame!! Reflect a moment. How does your conduct compare with that of devils? You believe, but you tremble not. Nay, you fling from you the very message which proffers you pardon and peace.

How can you account for your hardness, your impenitent heart? Can your conduct be the result of deliberate judgment? No! no; alas! no. You do not stop to think. The offer of salvation from the terrors of eternal death is made to you "without money and without price." What measure of punishment can be too great for you if you neglect this "so great salvation?" How do you feel in view of the terrible meeting with your offended Judge? How will you stand when he appeareth? Will you not call upon the rocks and hills to fall upon you, and hide you from the wrath of God and the Lamb? Solemn question! O sinner, come to the long-despised Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. His blood alone can wash away your sins. Come in humility. Come repenting of all your sins. Come in faith. Come with the cry of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Come to Christ, who never sent a repentant sinner empty away. Come at once, come *now*, come feeling—

"I cannot perish, if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die."

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No. 271.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

Synopsis of the Bible Argument for the Christian Sabbath, as a Divine Ordinance of Universal and Perpetual Obligation.

In the unfortunate controversy among the Protestants of the Reformation, respecting the sacredness and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath as a divine ordinance—which controversy may be traced, perhaps, to the zeal of Luther and Calvin, against even the semblance of Judaical legalism, as well as their just hostility to mere ecclesiastical ordinance, as of authority over the conscience—the British, and after them the American Churches, have generally held the stricter views of the sacredness of the Sabbath, against the laxer views of the Continental Churches.

Yet at the same time, both in Britain and America, a perpetual conflict has been necessary to maintain this stricter view against the combined influence of semi-popish Churchism, of the type of Laud and the "Book of Sports," immigrant Continental Protestantism, Popery, and open Infidelity—all of which unite with the secularism of the masses to overthrow the Christian Sabbath, or at least to pervert it into a mere holiday, instead of a day wholly consecrated to the public and private worship of God.

In this struggle, too, there is reason to fear that, in their zeal to gain the popular verdict and meet the popular prejudices, as in the Sabbath Mail controversies, and other efforts to gain legislative sanction and

protection for the Sabbath—its advocates have based the argument a little too exclusively on grounds of *expediency;* and have sometimes even attempted to enforce their views by doubtful illustrations, to the effect that Providence directly interferes in the ordinary events of life, to reward the obedient and punish the Sabbath-breaker, thereby appealing to interest, rather than conscience.

It may be well, therefore, to present in the briefest space possible, a suggestive synopsis of the purely Bible argument for the Sabbath addressed to the conscience. This argument any intelligent reader of the Bible can expand for himself, and apply as an antidote to the popular sophisms by which Sabbath-keeping men are constantly assailed.

Dr. Paley, the popular authority with the "Book of Sports" school, against our views of the Sabbath, admits that "*If the divine command in reference to the Sabbath was actually given at creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species alike, and continues, unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it.*" We commence our argument with the proof that this command was *given at creation*, and was never repealed, not only for the sake of claiming this admission, but also because this is the natural order of the discussion.

1. It is a strong, if not a conclusive, presumption, that the Sabbath is co-eval with creation, that any plain reader—with no theory to support of a reason *proleptically* assigned here for a law given two thousand five hundred years afterwards—would understand the Sabbath then to have been instituted, when "God

rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God *blessed* the seventh day and *sanctified it;* (set it apart as holy,) because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." (Gen. ii. 3.) And such plain readers would understand that the Sabbath was ordained for man as man, to commemorate creation and Jehovah God as the Creator, against the idolatry whose ignorance of the origin of all things, it was foreseen would tend to multiply gods. Hence the saying of the Rabbins, "He that violates the Sabbath denies the creation." The Sabbath, therefore, was instituted for all, if all men should worship a Creator. This common sense interpretation is confirmed by the saying of Jesus. "The Sabbath was made for man," generically, not merely for the Jew. And these words clearly imply also, that the Sabbath was made *when man was made.* This interpretation is further confirmed by the Apostle's argument in Heb. ii. 3, distinguishing the rest in Canaan from the previous *Sabbatical rest.* For, instead of saying, with Dr. Paley, "although the rest of the seventh day had been instituted in the wilderness," Paul says "although the works were finished from the foundation of the world,"—intimating that this Sabbath had been instituted when the works were finished at creation. Nor can the entire argument of the Apostle in this place be interpreted to make sense, except upon the supposition that the Sabbath began, as the plain reading of the record states, at creation.

2. The history of the observance of the Sabbath in the wilderness, when the manna was given, (Ex. xvi. 22, 23,) and the very terms in which it was re-pub-

lished as part of the great universal moral law on Sinai, (Ex. xx. 8,) both imply the previous existence of the Sabbath. In the one case the people evidently understood that the manna for the seventh day was to be gathered on the sixth, which could only have been from previous usage of a Sabbath. The *reason* for the double quantity on the sixth day, had not been explained to them. In the other case, the command to hallow the Sabbath is introduced with "Remember" the Sabbath day, as would be natural in referring to an existing institution, but not in the first institution of it. And besides, the "reason annexed" to the command manifestly refers to a previous institution of it at creation, and cites the very words of institution from Gen. ii. 2, 3.

It is of no force to argue that there is no explicit mention of the Sabbath in the history of the first two thousand, five hundred years; therefore it could not have existed. Neither is there any mention of the Sabbath for four hundred years after Moses; does it therefore follow that, notwithstanding the fourth Commandment, there was no actual Sabbath during that period? Neither is there any mention of circumcision, in the history, for fifteen hundred years after the entrance into Canaan until the birth of Christ; does it therefore follow that circumcision, as a rite, did not exist?

It is of no force either to argue, as some have done, that Nehemiah, (ix. 14,) declares, "*God made known* to Israel his holy Sabbaths," and therefore they must have been first instituted in Israel. For David says also, "God made *known* his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel;" yet no one supposes

that, therefore, his ways and acts were not known before, or did not exist before. Nor is there more force in the argument that by Ezekiel (xx. 10–12) Jehovah declares, "I *gave them* my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them," therefore the Sabbath was first instituted for Israel; for Jesus declares also, (Gen. vii. 27,) "*Moses gave you* circumcision," but no one supposes therefore that circumcision was not instituted in the family of Abraham long anterior to Moses. That the Sabbath is spoken of in Exodus, and subsequent books of the Old Testament, as a *sign* and a *covenant* of Jehovah with Israel, and to be observed for reasons peculiar to their history, no more proves that the Sabbath was not previous to Moses an existing institution, than the fact that he made the rainbow the sign of his covenant with Noah proves that the rainbow and the natural law of refraction and reflection did not exist in nature previous to Noah.

4. It is in full confirmation of this interpretation of Gen. ii. 2, 5, that the fact of the institution of the Sabbath for man as man, at creation, is absolutely necessary to any rational explanation of the universal division of time into periods of seven days—a division founded upon no natural law, as are the divisions of time by days, and months, and years. In fact, the division of time into weeks is not only *non-natural*, but in a sense *contra*-natural, since the week of seven days is no subdivision of either the naturally measured month or year. Yet this singular measure of time by periods of seven days may be traced not only through the sacred history before the era of Moses, but in all ancient civilizations of every era, many of which could not possibly have derived the notion from Moses.

We find that the first record of worship is that of Cain and Abel, "at the end of days"—obviously at the divinely appointed time for worship, on the seventh day of the week, for why else should the time be noted, or why else should both come at the same time? "Seven fold," and "seventy and seven fold," had already become poetic numbers in the time of Lamech. In the history of the flood, in which many dates are precisely given, not less than four regularly recurring periods of seven days are mentioned, and these in connection with his sending forth the raven and the dove —showing probably that, in connection with his weekly Sabbath worship, while he prayed for deliverance, he watched also for an answer to prayer. In the story of Jacob's service of two periods of seven years, we find Laban saying, "Fulfil her *week*," that is, a week of years, showing, beyond dispute, that the week was then known as a division of time. At the institution of the passover in Egypt, the feast of a week was appointed. And, as we have shown already, at the first giving of the manna, the people showed themselves familiar with the usage of a Sabbath on the seventh day.

It adds force to this confirmation from sacred history, that so far as we can trace the history of the nations which sprung from the family of Noah, this peculiar non-natural division of time into weeks was known to all nations. Among the learned of Egypt—the Brahmins of India—by Arabs, by Assyrians, as may be gathered from their astronomers and priests, this division was recognized. Hesiod (900 B. C.,) declares, "The seventh day is holy." So Homer and Callimachus. Even in the Saxon mythology, the

division by weeks was prominent. Nay, even among the tribes of Devil-worshippers in Africa, we are told, that a peculiar feature of their religion is a weekly sacred day, the violation of which by labour, will incur the wrath of the Devil-god. Traces of a similar division of time have been noticed among the Indians of the American continent. Now, on what other theory are these facts explicable, than upon the supposition of a divinely ordained Sabbath at the very origin of the race? Thus, all lines of argument, alike from the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, from the testimony of Scripture history, and from the otherwise inexplicable facts of profane history, converge to prove the correctness of the plainest common-sense interpretation of the record of the institution of the Sabbath at the creation for man, *as man*, and the republishing thereof in the universal moral law given to the church of God at Sinai.

5. It is a flimsy logical subterfuge to say, if we take the Jewish law of the Sabbath, we must take also its Jewish death-penalty for violation of the Sabbath. The Sabbath law was re-published among the precepts of the great moral law given the church of God, *as a church*, at Sinai; for it will be seen by reference to Ex. xix. 3–10, that the law was given formally to his Covenant church. The law of the Sabbath in the fourth Commandment, is no more distinctively Jewish than the law against false worship, profanity, disobedience of parents, murder, adultery, or theft. That the civil law of the Jewish *state*, for reasons peculiar to a theocratic state, annexed the penalty of death to Sabbath-breaking, as treason and insult to the theocratic king, no more requires that we take the state-law penalty,

if we take the moral law of the Sabbath, than that the death penalty appointed by the Jewish civil law to false worship, profanity, disobedience to parents, or adultery, must also be taken if we take those precepts of the moral law. If the death penalty annexed by the Jewish civil law to Sabbath desecration, voids the moral law of the Sabbath in the fourth Commandment, as of universal obligation, and makes it merely Jewish, than the death penalty annexed by the Jewish civil law to false worship, profanity, disobedience to parents, and adultery voids the 1st, 2d, 3d, 5th, and 7th Commandments as of universal obligation, and makes them merely Jewish. No argument can void the 4th Commandment as universal law that does not void the whole.

Nor is that a less flimsy subterfuge which demands that if we take the Sabbath law of the Jews, we must take the seventh day of the week, and the ceremonial observances appointed for that day. If the ceremonial worship appointed to the church of God in that era as best adapted to hold forth to the church, in such a state, Christ and him crucified, be changed for another mode of holding forth the same truth better adapted to the church under the new circumstances in the Apostolic era, that involves no essential change of creed, and no different way of salvation. Neither, if, in connection with the change in the mode of holding forth the truth, the day of worship is also changed to meet the new circumstances, and to commemorate the great new event, even the *finishing of his work* by God the Redeemer, does that involve any change in the nature of the day, or impair its original moral obligation.

So also with the pretence that Jesus Christ relaxed or abolished the law of the Sabbath, because he expounded that law truly against Pharisaic corruptions and glosses. Just as logically argue that he relaxed or abolished the law against profanity, disobedience to parents, murder, and adultery, because in like manner he expounded these against Pharisaic corruptions. While as "Lord of the Sabbath" he claimed indeed the right to regulate its observance, and accordingly did afterwards change the day, yet, as a Jew, "as his custom was," he *went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day*, and, in accordance with the original Sabbath law, engaged in the worship of God.

6. It remains now to show that the change of the day from the seventh to the first day of the week, in no degree impairs the nature and moral obligation of the original law; and that the change was made not by any mere ecclesiastical authority or usage, but by the divine authority of Christ himself, directly, and through his Apostles.

Manifestly the mere change from the seventh to the first day of the week cannot, in itself, involve *the essence* of the moral law of the Sabbath, which enjoins six days work, and a seventh day of rest. The question of the particular twenty-four hours to be observed neither is, nor can be of the same importance with the question of a Sabbath of one-seventh of time devoted to the service of God. For, as matter of fact, the inhabitants of different parts of the globe cannot observe the same twenty-four hours for their Sabbath; but a portion of the first day in one longitude must form a portion of the seventh day in another. Plainly, therefore, the question of *which hours*, must depend upon

some *positive* precept, as distinguished from that which is essentially *moral*, and cannot be like the great moral law, of unchangeable obligation.

As the original Sabbath commemorated the Creator in the finishing of his work, and subsequently was made commemorative also of his special acts of grace to the Jewish church, without impairing at all or changing the original purpose of it; so, without impairing it, when the Redeemer of man, in rising from the dead, had finished his work of redemption, there was a special fitness in making the Sabbath commemorate this event as the newest and highest manifestation of God's glory. This estimate of the relative importance of the event of the resurrection is not our conjecture; the Apostle Paul expressly declares it to be the key-stone fact of the history of redemption, the denial or ignoring of which voids the whole gospel creed. (1 Cor. xv. 14–17.) There was no need for a formal institution, for the Sabbath already was instituted; just as there was no need either for the formal institution of a church visible, with ordinances of worship, after the death and resurrection of Christ, for they also already existed. But in both cases such change of form must be made as to adapt both the church with its worship, and also the Sabbath, to the new order of things. It is only in accordance, therefore, with the general method of revelation that no other enunciation be made of the change in the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day, than simply the recorded practice of Christ and his Apostles, and such incidental recognition of the change as may occur in their teachings. This recognition we have abundantly.

On the evening of his resurrection, on the first day

we find his disciples assembled, and Jesus discovering himself to them in the blessing and breaking of the sacramental bread. On that day week, the succeeding first day, we find them again assembled, evidently for worship, and Jesus again appears among them and convinces Thomas. On that day six weeks again, as they are praying "with one accord in one place," they "were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues," and thousands were converted under Peter's sermon. And that this was intended to mark the change of Sabbath worship to the first day is manifest from the fact that subsequently we find Paul, on coming to Troas, waiting seven days for an opportunity to preach to the disciples "on the first day of the week when they came together to break bread," showing that usage had already settled the public worship on the first day. Accordingly in the Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 1,) this usage is recognized in the direction for the weekly offering of the *Koinonia*, or "fellowship" contribution on the first day. "Now concerning the *collection for the saints* upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Here is not only the recognition of the first, as the day of Apostolic worship, but also the recognition of the original week of *six days business*, in which "God hath prospered them" in their business, *followed by* one *day of rest* from the employments of the other six. And now to complete the view, we find at the close of the Apostolic era the usage so universally recognized as to have originated a title for the day, "I was in the Spirit," says John, on the "Lord's day," by which title, as both ecclesiastical

and profane history testify, the first day of the week was known in the church and observed as the day of worship from the time of the Apostles.

7. If even the direct authority of precept for the change be demanded, it may readily enough be deduced from the apostolic Epistles. The Apostle Paul directly enjoins upon Christians not to submit to the demands of Judaizers in the church, who, naturally enough, struggled to preserve the observance of the seventh day, and would have imposed it upon the conscience. In Rom. xiv. 5, and Col. ii. 16, 17, the Apostle, while yielding that those whose taste and feeling lead them to observe the seventh day also, are at liberty to do so, yet specifically declares that the demand to impose the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, as well as of new moons and other Jewish festivals, must be vigorously resisted as invaders of Christian liberty. All of which plainly show that the seventh day was held to be no longer binding, but in its stead the first day of the week as "The Sabbath of the Lord."

In the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, whose scope is to show that in the passing away "of the shadows of good things to come" in the ordinances of the old economy, all the substance *remains* in the ordinances of the new, Paul, in chap. iii. and iv., argues that, just as God rested on, and sanctified the seventh day after six days of creation, and made that rest a type of the eternal rest into which Old Testament saints were to be admitted, so, under the new economy, "there *remaineth* a *sabbatism* (a Sabbath-keeping) to the people of God,"—and for an analogous reason. "For," (as God the Creator rested from his finished

work and sanctified the day of rest) so "He, Jesus Christ, that is, entered into his rest, hath ceased from his labours as God did from his;" and therefore sanctified the first day as commemorative of his finished work of redemption, to remain the *sabbatism* of his people. That such is the meaning of this passage in Heb. iv. 9, 10, is manifest, first from the fact that the word "rest" in verse 9 is a different word from that translated "rest" in verses 1st, 3d, 5th, 8th, 10th and 11th, and is a peculiar word descriptive of the earthly Sabbath-keeping, rather than either "rest" abstractly, or the eternal Sabbath as in the other places. And, in the second place, the "for" in verse 10, assigns a reason why this *sabbatism* remaineth, precisely analogous to the reason assigned in verse 4, for the existence of the old Sabbath, viz: that He (Christ) finished his work of redemption by his resurrection on that day. In this view of the subject also, we perceive what is otherwise difficult to perceive: the connection between David's prophetic declaration of Christ's triumph, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the headstone of the corner," and, thereupon, the additional prophetic utterance: "This *is the* day the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it."

If this is a fair view of the facts, as presented in Scripture, it is plain that the Sabbath, as originally ordained from creation and republished in the great moral law to the church, is still binding in all its force on the conscience, precisely to the extent that any other precept of that law is binding; that the change of the day, from the seventh to the first, no more impairs the obligation to keep it, than the change of the

form of presenting the gospel of Christ crucified impairs the obligation to believe in Christ; that this change to the first day to commemorate primarily the finishing of the work of redemption, as the old Sabbath commemorated primarily the finished work of creation, is clearly by the authority of Christ directly, and through his Apostles; and that the evidence of such change so far from resting upon ecclesiastical and patristical testimony merely, is found in the example of Christ and his Apostles and in the direct teaching of Apostles and Prophets.

NOTE.—The writer's interpretation of Heb. iv. 9, 10, differs from that usually adopted. But whether his view of the passage be accepted or not, the scriptural argument as presented in the *entire* tract, must be regarded as very forcible and conclusive.

EDITOR OF THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

How calm and beautiful the morn
That gilds the sacred tomb,
Where once the Crucified was borne,
And veiled in midnight gloom!
Oh weep no more the Saviour slain;
The Lord is risen—he lives again.

Ye mourning saints, dry every tear
For your departed Lord;
"Behold the place—he is not here,"
The tomb is all unbarred;

The gates of death were closed in vain;
The Lord is risen—he lives again.

Now cheerful to the house of prayer,
Your early footsteps bend,
The Saviour will himself be there,
Your advocate and friend:
Once by the law your hopes were slain,
But now in Christ ye live again.

How tranquil now the rising day!
'Tis Jesus still appears,
A risen Lord to chase away
Your unbelieving fears:
Oh weep no more your comforts slain;
The Lord is risen—he lives again.

And when the shades of evening fall,
When life's last hour draws nigh,
If Jesus shines upon the soul,
How blissful then to die!
Since he has risen who once was slain,
Ye die in Christ to live again.

GLORY OF CHRIST.

Awake our drowsy souls,
Shake off each slothful band;
The wonders of this day
Our noblest songs demand:
Auspicious morn, thy blissful rays
Bright seraphs hail, in songs of praise.

At thy approaching dawn,
  Reluctant death resigned
The glorious prince of life,
  In dark domains confined;
The angelic host around him bends,
And 'midst their shouts, the God ascends.

All hail, triumphant Lord,
  Heaven with hosannas rings;
While earth in humble strains,
  Thy praise responsive sings:
Worthy art thou, who once wast slain,
Through endless years to live and reign.

Gird on, great God, thy sword,
  Ascend thy conquering car,
While justice, truth, and love
  Maintain the glorious war:
Victorious, thou thy foes shalt tread
And sin and hell in triumph lead.

Make bare thy potent arm,
  And wing the unerring dart
With salutary pangs,
  To each rebellious heart;
Then dying souls for life shall sue
Numerous as drops of morning dew.

No. 272.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

SINCE the commencement of the present civil war tens of thousands of brave men have volunteered and gone into the army. The call made by the chief magistrate for aid to sustain the Government, met a hearty response. Stirred with patriotism, men left their homes, friends, temporal interests, and all the enjoyments of social life, and hasted to the tented field. No sacrifices were too great to make, no hardships to endure, and no difficulties to encounter, as in one unbroken mass they rallied around the banner of their country.

These men acted nobly. They discharged their duty to their country promptly and fearlessly.

And why will not the unconverted as certainly hear and respond to the call of the great Captain of our salvation? This call, too, is for volunteers, and no call was ever more important or more urgent. His cause is assailed and suffering. The prince of darkness—a great *rebel*—under a false pretext, has mustered a mighty host, and made an attack upon his Sovereign. He aims to overturn the Government of Heaven, the best in the universe. And nothing but superior power will thwart his hellish purposes.

You have a place to occupy, and something to do in this great struggle. You must be on one side or the other. There is no neutral ground here. "He that is not for me is against me," says the Saviour.

If against Christ, then you are on the wrong side—you are with the rebels and their leader. All your

influence goes to support their sinking cause. And being called and urged to change sides, you ought to desert them at once. Though the devil has sentinels around you—for he cannot trust his subjects—and sees that you are constantly watched, always threatening what he will do if you desert—still, by Divine grace, you may leave him, and ought to do it. Your very best interests require it, and the Lord calls you upon his side to volunteer. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

Now whenever a man discovers he is on the wrong side, whether in politics or religion, he ought to leave it at once. Neither pride of character, opinion of companions, love of gain, or dread of superiors should hold him. It is noble and safe to change from wrong to right—to flee an enemy, and join a friend.

You are asked to enlist in a good cause. It is the cause of God—the cause of truth, of righteousness, and of love. It is a cause which Jesus has undertaken, and sustains. It is carried on at the expense and with the omnipotent aid of the Government of Heaven, and will be triumphant.

There are some terrible conflicts; but no battles are lost in this campaign, however appearances may seem to indicate the contrary.

You are called to enlist under a glorious leader "King Jesus is your Captain." Just such a leader as you need. He has taken the field. He is well acquainted with all his enemies—he knows all their strategic movements. He himself plans every battle—leads on his forces, and issues the orders.

Jesus has already conquered. "He conquered when he fell." And he rose again that the victory might be more complete. In vision John saw him, "seated upon a white horse, having a bow, and a crown was given unto Him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer." And he will not stop until the victory is complete. You have nothing to fear if you only enlist under him and obey his orders.

The rebels began this war. They did it without any good reason. Their leader

> ——— "Aspiring
> To set himself in glory above his peers
> Raised impious war in Heaven."

And being overcome and cast out, it is continued on earth. Multitudes unwillingly are drawn into the conflict. "They know not what they do." May be you are one of the number drawn into the enemy's ranks, you participate in his struggle, and will share his fate. The conflict will be short. The overthrow will be complete. You will suffer the loss of every thing. Conquered, disgraced, and condemned, you will receive neither honour, pay, nor bounty.

The cause is bad—the company bad—the leader thoroughly bad, and the end will be dreadful. It will be such a triumphant victory for Jesus that the devil already trembles and dreads the results. He wickedly entered into the war, and must make the most of it. For when subdued he knows that his ruin will be absolute and eternal. He can never again dwell in heaven, and will not only be regarded as a rebel and a traitor, but will be treated as such. He will be punished. You will not be above your leader. Being joined with him, in fighting against God, with him you will fall and suffer, unless you now repent.

As an inducement for you to volunteer under Jesus, pardon is now freely offered. And the Lord of Hosts will welcome you into his ranks with looks of love and tender acts of reconciliation.

With Him you will share in all the honours of a conqueror, and receive all the bounties which he confers upon his soldiers. While here you will have to wear the whole armour of the gospel and meet the assaults of the enemy, but the conflict will be short. Then your "rest will be glorious."

It were honour enough to be engaged in such a

war, with such comrades, and to be made "conquerors through Him that hath loved us and given himself for us;" but a glorious crown will also be bestowed and worn in the church triumphant. Here you will have victories, but there you shall have honours, such as Jesus only can give, and which will far more than compensate for the long marches, many battles, and severe trials of life. The struggle will then be over, and your enemies as though they had never been. The last one shall be swallowed up in victory. And in ecstacies of the purest delight, every hero will cast his crown at the feet of his Leader, "saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Who would not be a volunteer in Christ's army, battling enemies, gaining victories, and securing honours?

Reader! will you respond to the call? Enlist under the banner of the cross. Give your name, your hand, and your heart to Christ, as brave men every day are voluntarily laying every thing upon the altar of their country. The call is from heaven. It is loud and urgent. You are wanted, and wanted *now*. The war continues—soldiers are dropping off every day. The ranks must be filled.

Will you come? You cannot send a substitute or pay a bounty. Neither would be accepted. You must come yourself. You yourself must either be found on the side of Christ, meeting enemies, fighting battles, and gaining victories, or remain where you are, to occupy a rebel's place, to do a rebel's work, and to meet a rebel's doom.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

GAMING AND GAMBLING.

By the Rev. GEO. S. MOTT.

There is a difference between *gaming* and *gambling*. Gaming consists in playing cards, dice, billiards and the like, for mere amusement. Gambling is the practice of gaming for money. And before we enter upon a consideration of the vice of gambling, let us direct our attention a little to the *evils* of gaming.

I. The inquiry is often put: Where is the harm of a game of billiards or cards? The harm is threefold.

1. *In the surroundings.* Take a game of billiards, for example. This is a game which depends so much on skill, that it is a question whether it should be put in the category with cards. And yet it is turned to the purposes of gambling. A small stake is put up to give life to the play. And what are generally encountered at the billiard table? Profanity, lewd conversation, vulgar jests, and the drinking of ardent spirits. Besides, this game and similar lead to late hours. The young man is enticed from his home. He is deprived of necessary repose. He is wasting precious time, which should be spent in self-improvement. The man of family is kept away from those whose society he should prefer to all others. His money is wasted, and he acquires the habit of seeking pleasure away from her whom he promised to cherish and protect.

2. Another evil of these games *is a fostering of a*

taste for hazards, which may finally lead to gambling. When a man finds himself an adept at cards, the temptation will be strong, and in many instances irresistible, to profit by his skill, and play for money. He will think it an easy way to get funds. It is taking a viper to the bosom, which when warmed may sting to death.

3. There is a *most unhealthy excitement connected with gaming.* The player becomes wholly absorbed. The pulse rushes with accelerated speed. The face flushes. The eye stares wildly. The feelings are wrought to the highest pitch, and a state of mind is produced, which often breaks out in unkind words. The love of play grows on that upon which it feeds. The mind becomes as eager for the game, as the drunkard is for his cup. It becomes a passion, and little else is thought of, or desired. And now what is to be said of a game of cards in the family, or at a social gathering? It is often replied, "what harm is in it?" "It helps to pass away an evening."

"It is related of Mr. Locke, that being invited to a company of the highest rank, and hearing cards called for as soon as dinner was over, he retired thoughtful to a window; and being asked the reason of his seriousness he replied, he had not slept the foregoing night, for the pleasure which their lordships had given him to expect from that day's conversation, with men of the first character for sense and genius; and he hoped his sorrow for his disappointment would be forgiven. This seasonable rebuke had the proper effect. The game was instantly abandoned, and conversation restored with a brilliancy suitable to the illustrious assembly."

Says one, "Cards are the universal mode of a whole class of people, who pique themselves on being intelligent and polite, and yet the best that can be said of cards is, that they make people easy by allowing them to be dull, and superseding the necessity of their being entertaining."

Addison writes in No. 93 of the Spectator, "One of the methods, which I would propose for filling up our time, should be useful and innocent diversion. I must confess, I think it is below reasonable creatures to be altogether conversant in such diversions as are merely innocent," and have nothing else to recommend them, but that there is no hurt in them; whether any kind of gaming has even thus much to say for itself, I shall not determine; but it is very wonderful to see persons of the best sense, passing away a dozen hours together, in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation but what is made up of a few game phrases; no other ideas but of black and red spots ranged together in different figures. Meanwhile there is a conflict of the lowest and basest passions. And if there be some skill required, the highest is still so unworthy of ambition, that creatures who do not discover common sense in other things often excel in this.

"The strong desire shall ne'er decay,
Who plays to win, shall win to play;
The breast where love had planned his reign,
Shall burn unquenched with lust of gain;
And all the charms that wit can boast,
In dreams of better luck be lost!
Thus neither innocent nor gay,
The useless hours shall fleet away;
While time o'erlooks the trivial strife,
And, scoffing, shakes the sands of life."

II. Let us now turn our thoughts to the vice of *gambling*. This assumes several forms, besides the hideous one of the professed gambler.

1. *Betting is gambling*. Whether a man bets on the speed of a horse, or lays a wager upon the performance or non-performance of any matter, he is gambling. The profane oath is often brought in as a sort of proof, or asseveration; so the offer to bet is supposed to strengthen an assertion. This pernicious habit prevails widely. Bets are often made in sport, and sometimes by those who do not realize the nature of the act, and who would shrink in alarm from avowed gambling. Sometimes the forfeit is to be paid to a charitable institution, but that does not lessen the sin. Betting puts money at hazard, and the recipient gets it without rendering an equivalent to the loser. That is the principle of gambling. This is a wide-spread evil in our country during the exciting period of a Presidential election. Every man ought to be careful that his political fervour does not lead him astray, to accept some provoking banter.

2. *Lotteries* are another species of Gambling. The lottery system dates back several centuries. It has received the sanction of governments, and in many instances of religious bodies. Lotteries have been resorted to, as a source of revenue to the state; as in France, where, from the years 1816 to 1828 they yielded fourteen millions of francs per annum. Loans have been raised by the same means in Austria, Prussia, and most of the German States; in Great Britain, and in several States of the Union. Public works, colleges, charitable institutions, and even churches have been aided from this source. Thus lotteries enjoyed a kind of

sanction, which raised them above ordinary gambling. Yet from the earliest stages of their existence, earnest remonstrances were raised against them. Of late years their ruinous effects upon public morals have been so apparent, that in almost all countries they are now prohibited by legislative enactments. But the evil is by no means eradicated. In several States of the Union they are tolerated. Advertisements stare at you in the public journals, stating what sums have been drawn; thus throwing out a bait to the unwary. With unblushing impudence, hand-bills of lottery schemes are thrust into our houses by mail, and the number who are thus ensnared is far larger than is generally supposed.

In no respect is the lottery system removed from gambling. The essential feature is the same, viz. procuring money by chance, and without giving an equivalent for it. Every ticket-holder is a partner in the lottery-game; and the managers are his deputed agents to play it. The attending evils are the same, the exciting of an unnatural thirst for gain, and cherishing the inclination to indulge in games of hazard, which soon becomes an uncontrollable passion.

Most persons are enticed to try lotteries, from a desire to get rich in other ways than by the accumulations of industry. This is a growing evil of the present age. It is poisoning the minds of the young. Men want to live and thrive by speculations, and by fat contracts; so that the humbler walks of toil are despised and forsaken. But be assured that it is no advantage to get rich suddenly. Nine out of ten would be ruined were a fortune thrown into their laps in early life. What men need, is to acquire habits

of patience, of self-denial, of steady application to duty, and of prudent forecast, which are as necessary to keep a fortune, as to get it. Without these, wealth is soon squandered. This is a fatal evil of lotteries. So soon, and so easily is money obtained, where one is successful, that it loses its value. This is the history of the few winners in lotteries, while the greater portion by far, of those who buy tickets, waste their money in fruitless efforts to draw a prize. Innumerable instances might be enumerated to prove, that money gained by the lottery is a curse to the winner.

A respectable farmer drew a prize of $10.000. His first expenditures embraced many improvements upon his farm, and the building of a large house. But the tavern soon overcame his attachment to his family, his pecuniary affairs were neglected, he became a bankrupt, a drunkard, and to end his miserable existence, was his own murderer.

Some twenty-eight years ago the clerk in a Boston house, a man in middle life, committed suicide by drowning himself. So eminent was his character for integrity and purity, that when he was found dead, every one believed that he had been murdered, until the acknowledgment of his guilt was found in his own handwriting. It was this. "I have for the last seven months gone fast down the broad road to destruction. The time I note my deviation from the path of rectitude was about the middle of last June, when I took a share in a company of lottery tickets, whereby I was successful in obtaining a share of one half the capital prize, since which I have gone into purchases for myself; and that too not on a very small scale, as you can judge from the amount due J. R. & Co. every

dollar of which has been spent in that way. I have lived or dragged out a miserable existence for two or three months past. Oh that seven or eight months of my existence could be blotted out! But no, I must go, and ere this paper is read, my spirit is gone to my Maker, to give an account of my misdeeds here, and receive the dreadful sentence for self-destruction, and abused confidence. Oh wretch! lotteries have been thy ruin."* Thus the winner is drawn on to ruin. God's frown rests on riches obtained unlawfully.

And the unsuccessful are impoverished. In a period of five years, according to the records of the Insolvent Court of Philadelphia, it was shown that nearly $200,000 were lost by dealing in lottery tickets on the part of those who applied for the benefit of the insolvent law. When cases of embezzlement are traced out, it is very often found that a large part of the purloined money has gone to purchase lottery tickets.

Though public sentiment and state legislation declare against lotteries, so that a ban is put on them, yet one kind of lottery remains, and retains a place in public favour. We refer to raffling in all its forms. Raffling has often been called in to the aid of religious and benevolent fairs, and for this use it is tolerated by many who disapprove of it; while others do not hesitate to pronounce it harmless. But the raffle in its essential features is a lottery. It is an effort to obtain more than a fair equivalent for one's money. The law denominates it gambling, and forbids it. Yet the law against it has been almost a dead letter.

The judgment must not be deceived by the worthy

* Thompson's Lectures to Young Men.

object in view. In such matters, where morals are at stake, we must regard principles. Where is the distinction between raffling to help on a benevolent purpose, or raffling for a turkey to feed my family? If I may rightfully take a chance to increase the funds of charity, may I not take a chance to put a coat upon my back? If the end justifies the means in the one case, certainly it does in the other. Not a reason can be urged in favour of raffling at fairs, which could not be pleaded by a poor man for private ends.

There are those who refer to the practice mentioned in Scripture of casting lots, and who assert that this sanctions a disposal of things by chance. A moment's examination of these instances shows, that they do not in the least sanction raffling in any of its forms. The casting of lots referred to in the Bible, generally signifies a mode of deciding that which cannot be left to man's choice, such as we now are familiar with, in the drawing of names for drafting into the army. That is a lawful mode of deciding, what could not in other ways be decided. Lots were cast in Scripture times, with a sincere desire that God should determine the result. His blessing was devoutly sought. Thus when the eleven Apostles drew lots whether Barnabas or Matthias should fill the place vacated by the suicide of Judas, they first asked the Divine guidance. If raffling at fairs is to be made equivalent to this, then let the resemblance be completed; and as the raffling is about to begin, let a prayer be offered for the presence and control of God's Spirit. At once we feel that this would be mockery.

III. We now turn to gambling proper, in its more

destructive and ensnaring forms. Its varied modes cannot here be described. Let us rather consider some of the fearful consequences of this sin.

1. *It wastes money.* The man indulging in gambling will hazard in it every cent he can get. No matter how often he loses, if he only occasionally wins, to encourage his continuance. He will borrow, or get money from any one, and under any pretence. If he be in business, he will encroach upon his capital. Thousands who have inherited a competency, and many of them a fortune, have lost all in a few years by gambling. A merchant has gone to one of our cities to purchase goods, he has been enticed by the professed gambler, and in a few hours has been stripped of every dollar, and turned into the streets almost a maniac.

2. *Gambling is destructive of every good habit.* It bids adieu to all the virtues. It stagnates the just and honourable affections of the soul. It quenches religious feeling. "Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to such." The church, prayer, the Bible, Christ, religion in all its ennobling commands and blessed promises, are nothing to him who is the victim of this accursed vice. The dear wife, children, or parents, are ruthlessly sacrificed on the altar of this destructive demon. He is deaf to every plea of pity or mercy. His heart is consumed by this fire of play, until every noble impulse, and generous emotion, and conscientious dictate are burnt to ashes. Such is its end.

But its beginning is not so. Its front is a palace, splendid with the lineaments of architecture. A balmy air floats through each room. Sweet music echoes in the halls. Rich carpets yield like down under the tread. The walls are beautified with pictures. The

new comer sees nothing to offend his modesty or refinement. But beyond this lies the room of wretchedness, in which the gambler ends his days. Look at that table, where paleness and dejection sit on the countenances of some; horrible perturbation is stamped on the brow of others; fearful blasphemies and oaths are heard on all sides; quarrels, curses, fightings, stabbings, cries of agony, the laugh of exultation, the grin of approaching idiocy, the jeers of the drunken courtesan, these present the midnight orgies of death and hell, and show us the mouth of the pit—"Lost! lost! lost! the die is cast, and I am lost, lost! lost!" once broke from a dying gambler's lips. "I suffer the fires of hell already! You need not tell me there is no hell; I know there is; I feel it already; I have it in anticipation. Lost! lost! lost for ever!"

"In a public debate in Philadelphia, on the subject of gambling, between a well known reformed gambler, and an acknowledged member of that fraternity; the following points were admitted on all hands as established.

1. That the winner is always in danger of murder and runs for his life. 2. The loser generally becomes a cheat, a murderer, a suicide, or a drunkard. 3. The tortures of the damned are common to all gamblers, winners and losers. 4. Deception and lying are their common attributes. 5. Outlawed by public opinion, they wage implacable war against the morals, peace, and happiness of society." In fact there is probably no one vice which makes a man more like the devils in hell, than does the vice of gambling. Four palaces Satan has built along the highway of this world, each of which leads to hell—the *Theatre*, the *Dram*

shop, the *Gambling House*, and the *Brothel*, and he who frequents one generally frequents all.

Young man, if your eye falls on this, beware of the gambler. Have you never seen him? He is a well-dressed gentleman, rather profuse with jewelry. He is very friendly, indeed somewhat officious. He inquires about your business, and prospects in life. He seeks your confidence that he may steal your purse. He hints at easy ways of getting a living. "There is no need," he says, "of a man making a slave of himself. The world owes every man a living." With such specious words he is poisoning your mind. Avoid him. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

But in another way the young man is enticed. He enters a parlour. He has never played cards before. But here is a table covered with cards, and the wine-cup is at hand; and beauty and intelligence are shuffling and dealing the innocent toys, and invite him to take a hand. In vain he pleads ignorance of the game. They will teach him. He becomes a learner. He plays on for the excitement, and to enjoy the pleasures of society. But mark the progress. He soon wants to play elsewhere than where beauty and intelligence preside. And it is tame to play for nothing, so a few nuts, a drink, a sixpence, a dollar is the stake. Thus is awakened the spirit of gambling. Thus is kindled the delicious but fatal excitement of winning money. Ah! what multitudes have had reason to curse the hour, when they were first invited to sit around such a table.*

And what is the plea urged by woman?—*woman*, who has so much to suffer from the gambler, whose

* Fisher's Three Great Temptations.

home may be desolated, whose heart may be wrung with sorrow, whose brow may be wrinkled prematurely, by this fiend—what plea does woman present with all her potent influence and charms to lead the young into the bewildering excitements of gaming? It is only, she says, a harmless amusement. Oh, that you knew, that under the specious name of amusement, you are laying the foundation of gambling. Harmless amusement! Can that amusement be harmless, which so often leads to penury and vice? To call playing cards a harmless amusement, is the same kind of deceptive name which is given to moderate drinking. But does not moderate drinking, in the majority of cases, lead to a drunkard's grave? Playing cards for amusement is the inclined plane, which by gradual descent ends at the gambler's table. The risk is so great, that no one who has a son or a brother to face the temptations of this life; or who desires that the young shall keep their way pure, should allow a game of cards, or of hazards of any kind in his house.

Reader, must you confess that you do play, and sometimes for money? Stop at once. To-day burn your cards. Vow before God never to play again, and ask him to help you to keep your vow. This is your safety. Said a man to the writer, "I found myself gambling. I saw the ruin before me. I resolved to stop. Companions urged me to continue. But I burnt my cards, and have never played since. That saved me."

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR!

J— T— was reared in the city of Boston, amid churches pointing their thick-set spires to heaven, and among groups that throng eagerly on the holy morning to their Sabbath schools. But before he reached perfect manhood, the incipient stages of consumption appeared, threatening to bring him down to an early grave. Helpless and wasted, he sought escape from this disease, on the shores of our great northern lakes. Here his restoration was astonishing: his life, through several years, was a standing wonder. But in the joyousness of recovered health, J. forgot the lessons of the Bible and Sabbath-school, and gave himself recklessly to folly and dissipation. His excesses brought him repeatedly to an apparently dying condition. At one time he was launched from his horse, and a blood-vessel broken in his lungs. He bled till all signs of life were gone, and a mirror was held to his lips to see if it caught the moisture of another last and feeble breath. Yet J. again recovered. When he got well, I wished to know what were his feelings and thoughts when near the precincts of another world. I asked him,

"Were you conscious while so very near to death?"

J. "Perfectly; I knew it all."

"What then were your views in prospect of passing into another world?"

J. "*To save my soul, I could not keep out of my mind a negro song which I had learned a few days before.*"

The words were shocking; the most terrible comment I had ever heard upon this warning of our Saviour: "Take heed what ye hear," Mark iv. 24. Here was a man early taught, long warned of his extreme peril, who at length saw death standing before his face, and eternity opened wide to close upon him, and he was unprepared. These moments while life was ebbing slowly away, were seemingly the only ones allowed, for ever, to provide for his soul, and still, in that awful crisis, whatever he might strive or wish to do, he was able to do nothing. And what was the fatal power that bound him helpless, in that dreadful hour? Only this "negro song," that ran in his thoughts and rang in his memory while dying. It would have been thought that, in such a solemn state, every power would have been subdued by the impending change. Looking across the gulf, as his eyes were, it would seem that nothing but what was *earnest* and *true* could find or force its way to his thoughts then. Yet mark his words: "To save my soul, I could not shut it out."

Anything else which was needful at that time, his resolution could effect. Shortly before, he dictated his will to bystanders, and when it had been brought and signed by him in tremulous lines, he pushed this aside, and called for another, that he might make his dying signature in his usual firm hand. But *this* was beyond his power,—to shut out from his mind and to banish this haunting, frivolous ballad. Though immortality hung upon the effort; eternal life, or eternal death: all endeavour was vain. Could Jesus himself have enforced that solemn "Take heed what ye hear," with a stronger warning of the danger than this example gives?

That song may not have been vicious; but it was enough to keep his soul out of heaven; to sink it to despair. It may only have been of a trifling kind; but what was that to bear upon his thoughts when going to the bar of God? There may be times when the babbling of some puerile ditty seems harmless levity only. Ah! this dying season is the test for all our pastimes.

Dear reader, do you take heed what you hear? Do you not willingly listen to speeches which would trouble your dying thoughts? Have you hearkened with pleasure to the song of wanton ribaldry; have you feasted your ears with a tale of pollution; or treasured the story of artful secret crime? Who knows then but the next instance of the Saviour's warning,

in terrible example, may be yours, when, *to save your soul*, you can no more shut these vile things out? At that fearful hour, no Christian friend may be able to help you. For whatever else they can do, *men cannot* control your thoughts for you; and because "as a simple one you have loved simplicity; and a scorner, you have loved scorning," God may refuse to restrain them then.

Ah! beware in season. You can learn such things at pleasure, but no earthly means can enable you at pleasure to forget. Entertain nothing which you would not have recalled when you are dying. Then you may find profane expressions or obscene thoughts as impossible for you to put away from you, as are dying pains, and they may shut your soul out of heaven, as inevitably as death agonies are cutting you off from life. "*Take heed what ye hear!*"

Mrs. H—— T—— long lived a most lovely and pious "mother in Israel." All her companions confided in her. She bound them about her by her manifest purity and holiness. Children did her reverence for the heavenly charms that beamed from her face. Inquirers sought her prayers, and trusted in her guidance.

Suddenly disease laid its power upon her reason, and it was given her to waste her last years under the dark cloud of insanity. At once horrid blas-

phemies broke from her utterance. Oaths, vulgarity and abuse proceeded from those lips, which for nearly a lifetime had scarcely been opened but to praise and to bless. Her neighbours were confounded; such language they pronounced "unaccountable."

But, no, it was natural, the sad and memorable repetition of the exhortation, "Take heed what ye hear." During her childhood her father was the keeper of a public house; and through one of our country's wars soldiers were often quartered there. And from the cursing and shameless tongues that rioted there, her childish memory caught the abominations, which, under a new life lay hid, till she repeated them, her head covered now with hoary hairs. I am happy to add, that her sun set at last in a flood of heavenly light. But those maniac ravings abide in memory, a thrilling caution: "Take heed what ye hear!"

A Christian lady, eminent alike for her mental power and warmth of piety, wife of a Presbyterian elder, has long complained that her holiest seasons were infested with the worst of suggestions. Infidelity's scoffing cavil, abhorrent sneers at Christ and salvation, thrust themselves upon her mind over all her innumerable convictions of truth. They polluted or dispelled faith's glowing visions and purest contemplations. She watches and struggles against these ene-

mies; but sinks sometimes beneath their cruel power. The whole case is clear, when it is added that this lady had in early years read Paine's "Age of Reason." Whether it it was through an earnest desire of independent inquiry, or through the usual bold confidence of "no danger," the mischief was the same. She had dared to follow and to listen to that prince of scoffers, while he was making Jehovah the butt of his vile scurrility, flouting and hissing with his derisive scorn at God's justice inflicted by the hands of Moses and Joshua. She promptly rejected and shuddered at the profane buffoonery of such a wretch; but, alas! those venomous stings, those pestilential wounds, have festered there, to her bitter sorrow, ever since.

Here is but one instance of a countless multitude, who have suffered like her. Deadly poison was once swallowed; the patient was relieved and saved; but ever after endured the consequences, in the rack of a shattered system, and the frequent recurrence of violent paroxysms. Likewise errors, the poison of the head, the heart, and the soul, have their deadly essence instilled into the mind through mockery of solemnities, through low ridicule, or sly insinuations, to which we listen. God may save us from the ruin called atheism, or the cold death of unbelief; but the dregs of that poison still linger within us, strong enough it may be for convulsions of our Christian trust, for the

waverings of spiritual feebleness and the tremblings of fears, for dimness of sight and for disturbing our soul's peaceful repose. God may freely forgive the heart; but he does not so slightly unburden the memory.

Beware, friends, beware what you hear! We know not that any thing can ever be forgotten. What you may be ashamed for, what God may be angry with you for, you cannot erase from your mind when you choose. And, if cherished once, they may return at a dying hour with power enough to keep you out of heaven.

Beware, parents, what your children hear! Do you suppose that when poisonous seeds are sown in your garden, no evil is done till the crop is ripe and your child is sickened,—its limbs twitching with symptoms of the death spasm—from eating? Just as mad is your deplorable mistake of supposing no harm is done your child by listening to vulgarity and oaths, until its tongue is heard to utter them. This sound upon the lips is but the resulting symptom to show you the death of the soul, already working within. Take heed then what your children *hear!*

PSALM I.

1 Blest is the man who shuns the place
Where sinners love to meet;
Who fears to tread their wicked ways,
And hates the scoffer's seat:

2 But in the statutes of the Lord
Has placed his chief delight;
By day he reads or hears the word,
And meditates by night.

3 He, like a plant of generous kind,
By living waters set,
Safe from the storms and blasting wind
Enjoys a peaceful state.

4 Green as the leaf, and ever fair
Shall his profession shine;
While fruits of holiness appear
Like clusters on the vine.

5 Not so the impious and unjust;
What vain designs they form!
Their hopes are blown away like dust,
Or chaff before the storm.

6 Sinners in judgment shall not stand
Among the sons of grace,
When Christ, the Judge, at his right hand,
Appoints his saints a place.

7 His eye beholds the path they tread,
His heart approves it well;
But crooked ways of sinners lead
Down to the gates of hell.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

WINE A MOCKER.

Wine is a mocker.—Prov. xx. 1.

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SECTION I.

By wine, Solomon frequently means whatever will intoxicate. In that sense it is now used. A mocker is one that scorns, scoffs, derides;—also one who deceives or imposes upon another. Frequently both meanings are included. In that sense a mocker is one who first deceives, then scoffs at and derides those whom he has deceived. Often his victims are unconscious of the deception, and will innocently join in the laugh that is raised at their expense. With the victims of wine it is often thus. They are deceived, dishonoured, unmanned, both in body and mind, yet are ignorant of the cause, and attribute to unfriendly providences, untoward circumstances, the evil effects of the wine cup.

SECTION II.

The effects of strong drink upon the mind are in their own nature deceitful, and of such a character as to unfit a person entirely for judging accurately concerning his own condition. To form a correct judg-

ment on this point requires skill, which skill can only be acquired by long and extended observation.

The following is the matured opinion of the medical profession. "The first effect of alcoholic liquors is to exalt the general sentiment of self-satisfaction and diffuse an unusual serenity over the mind. The intellectual as well as physical powers act with increased vigour and activity, the thoughts flow with more facility and accuracy, and the individual becomes well pleased with himself and others. He feels an exhilaration of spirits, a sense of warmth and gayety, and his imagination is filled with delightful images. The sight and hearing are very slightly affected, a low humming sound is heard in the pauses of conversation, and objects are enveloped in a slight mist. Thus far there is no appearance of drunkenness. Soon the torrent of his ideas becomes more rapid and violent, and he can scarcely repress them. This is the moment of his happiest sallies, and he pours forth his thoughts with a force of expression and a richness of conception unknown in his sober hours, and now he feels the ecstatic pleasure of getting drunk." (*Ray's Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity. Art.* Drunkenness, § 436.)

If the above is true, (and of its truth there can be no doubt,) the first effect of wine on the mind is to deceive in the most subtle manner.

The effect is pleasing, and of such a character as to

lull all suspicion, even as to remote danger. The effect is of great power ere any except a skilled observer can detect it. The habitual use of wine this side of that point where "there is no appearance of drunkenness," is very injurious.

Speaking of such a use, the same authority says, "Except in some rare cases the original delicacy and acuteness of the moral perceptions are blunted, the relations of neighbour, citizen, father, spouse, have lost their accustomed place in his thoughts; great moral interests no longer obtain a strong hold upon his attention; the voice of distress is like to fall on his ear like an unmeaning sound, and the finer emotions have entirely deserted his nature. The injury sustained by his intellect is more obvious, if not more deplorable. The course of his ideas is sluggish, and they want their former force and brilliancy; the mind has lost its comprehensiveness of grasp, and experiences a difficulty in seizing the relations of one idea to another. It is incapable of the long-continued efforts which were once easy, and of concentrating the whole force of its faculties on the subject of thought."

Such is the opinion of those best qualified to decide upon the subject. It is not the judgment of one physician, but of the profession. As such it is worthy of careful and solemn consideration. If it is correct, (and of its accuracy there can be no doubt,) it shows that there is tremendous meaning in the words, "Wine

is a mocker." It robs the soul of its greatest charm, delicate moral perceptions—weakens its power of thought—impairs the judgment. All this it will do when as yet "there is no appearance of drunkenness." Stealthily, noiselessly, will it blunt both moral and intellectual perceptions. Who does not tremble at a steady secret undermining of the intellect? Nothing is so sad as a mind becoming daily weaker from self-abuse. Such is the certain effect of the daily use of wine, not to the extent of visible drunkenness, but such as to excite the brain to action.

Is it not well termed a mocker, when under the false glare of a heightened imagination and a quickened perception, it destroys the moral sensibilities of the soul and weakens the powers of the mind?

"The effect on the brain of being accustomed to artificial stimulants, according to a well-known law of the animal economy, is to render it incapable of effort without its aid. Drinking is thus made an indispensable habit, and by this means it sometimes happens that the tame, cold, lifeless being, as if touched by a spark of Promethean fire, is converted into the animated, sociable, and efficient man of his better days. Sheridan never spoke in the House of Commons without the inspiration of half a pint of brandy."—*Ray's Medical Jurisprudence*, p. 437.

To be reduced to such a condition is indeed pitiable, and yet it is the sure and certain fate of all those who

keep their brain in a state of unnatural excitement from the habitual use of wine.

It is related of an eminent artist, that when he painted his last master-piece, he held his pencil in one trembling hand, his brandy and water in the other. That he sipped of the brandy until his hand was steady, when it ran rapidly over the canvas. He was soon forced to apply to his brandy, until by its stimulus he was again able to work. Thus he continued until his piece was finished, when he laid himself down and died. We feel like weeping as we read the sad story of this unhappy and fallen man.

Sad as his fate was, compared with others it was mild. Very frequently still more terrible results attend what is termed a wholesome use of wine. The tendency is to produce inflammation of the brain. When such inflammation has taken place and becomes chronic, the sufferer becomes fearfully conscious of the unrelenting tyranny and cruel mockery of the wine-cup.

Before its power he is helpless as an infant. No motives are then sufficient to restrain him from the maddening thirst. The following is the well-authenticated case of one who had contracted this terrible brain disease. A friend remonstrated with him, appealing to the distress of his family, the loss of his business and character, and the ruin of his health. He replied,

"I can no longer resist temptation. If a bottle of brandy stood on one hand, and the pit of hell yawned at the other, and I were convinced that I would be pushed in as sure as I took another drink, I could not resist."

In the case of the artist before mentioned, his brain would not work without it, and it was to stimulate to action that he resorted to the wine-cup. In the last case, it was an uncontrollable appetite arising from a diseased state of the brain, produced by the habitual use of wine. I well remember the emotions of a friend, as he told me of being suddenly made aware of this terrible disease. He was at the time an old man. Though in the habit of drinking freely and regularly until middle life, he was drunk but once. He could drink freely, and not appear to feel it. About middle life he from conscientious motives ceased drinking entirely. Several years after, he visited his daughter, who resided at a distance. On the way he stopped to transact some business. When about to leave, he was courteously invited to take a glass of Jamaica. After some hesitation he took it. He rode but a little way until he felt like a new man. His horse, though blind, he drove furiously over a rough road. Presently he came in sight of a tavern. Said he, "Oh the thirst I then felt for more! I cried, 'God save the poor old drunkard!' By a most strenuous effort I passed that deadly house, and

reached my journey's end without drinking more." Years after, the old man could not, without tears, speak of that hour of agony.

From this case we learn that daily stimulus produced an appetite of a strength and power of which this man was totally unconscious, until a taste of his old beverage revealed it. The only possible way of escape for this man, was total abstinence, not for a month or a year, but for life. One of the laws of our organization is, that an appetite once formed never dies. No difference how long the use of the article may be laid aside, the appetite will remain, and with every gratification will re-assert its power with increased vigour.

Truly had wine been a mocker to that old man. In the brain, that sacred temple of the soul, for years had it been laying the foundation of a disease, which in an unguarded moment made him writhe in anguish, and well nigh ruined him. Terrible ruin is the result in a multitude of cases. They are numbered by hundreds and thousands, who are as a reed shaken by the wind, and who can no more restrain the thirst that consumes them than a child can rein in the frightened steed. Our hearts grow sick as we count the number that are thus stricken by the mocker. The foundation was laid, and a firm seat gained for the disease, by that use of wine in which "there was no appearance of drunkenness."

SECTION IV.

It is in vain to say, that such persons are deficient in moral power. It is not as a general thing true. Many of them by nature have the finest moral and intellectual organizations. The true reason is, that their brains have a greater tendency to disease than others. Take the following instance.

There was a man who had been reared with tender and pious care. He had a wife and children, whom he tenderly loved. He was careful to shield his little ones from evil, and to teach holiness and truth. Punctually did he lead them to the Sabbath-school and to the house of God. One Saturday night he was not present to kiss his children good-night. Their mother took them to their chamber, heard them lisp their prayers to God for his blessing upon their mother and absent father.

She returned to the sitting-room to await the coming of the husband and father, but he came not. Until the day dawned she watched, then rising, threw a shawl around her, and hastened to his office, but found him not. Guided by her fears, she entered a saloon near by, and there she found him beastly drunk. She had him removed to his own office, locked the door, and did what she could to restore him to consciousness. Whilst thus employed, the Sabbath-school bell rang. From the window she could see the children hastening to school. With a breaking heart did

she think of her own little ones, who at that hour would be anxiously asking for both father and mother. Soon the church bell rang, and quickly the streets were full of people; husbands, and wives, and children, all hastening to the house of God. Presently the streets were vacant. Then, and not till then, did she unlock the door, supporting her still reeling husband, went out, and turning into the first dark alley, hastened home. It was a sad and bitter cup they drank upon that holy Sabbath morning. Bitter burning tears did they weep. Sad solemn promises that he would never so offend again did that father make. Vain promises! Delusive hopes! He had "looked upon the wine when it was red." Already had it "bitten him like a serpent, and stung him like an adder." The poison maddened him. Before its fury, wife, children, fortune, reputation, religion, heaven, hell, were nothing. He spurned them all, that he might feed the maddening thirst that was coursing through his veins.

Such instances as the above are without doubt cases of brain disease, produced by drinking. According to a law of our animal economy, the appetite and the disease react on each other. To feed the appetite aggravates the disease, and the disease increases the appetite.

Hence it is, that drinking is certain ruin to all who have a tendency to inflammation of the brain.

That one man becomes a drunkard and another does not, is not because one has a better balanced mind than the other, but because his brain is less sensitive. A truth so well established as this, should fill every one with a wholesome dread of the mocker, and make him careful not to lay the seat of such a terrible disease even by a moderate use of strong drink.

SECTION V.

The brain is not the only organ that suffers from an indiscreet use of wine. Sir Walter Scott, writing to his son, then an officer in the British army, says, "To drink hard is not one of your habits, but even drinking what is called a certain quantity every day, hurts the stomach, and by hereditary descent yours is delicate. I believe the poor Duke of Buccleugh laid the foundation of that disease, which occasioned his death, in the excesses of Villar's regiment. I am sorry, and ashamed, to say, for your warning, that the habit of drinking wine, so much practised when I was a young man, occasioned, I am convinced, many of my cruel stomach complaints." Such are the views of one who was eminent for his practical good sense. The Duke, to whom he refers, was a most estimable man, cut down in the prime of life by a disease contracted in his youth by the use of wine.

Scott says that his own health was seriously injured in the same way, although during his whole life he de-

spised drunkenness, and but very rarely gave himself to excess. In his old age, when his health demanded that its use should be abandoned, he could not and would not part with it, but continued to aggravate his disease and hasten his death by drinking wine daily.

When his last sickness came upon him, not his friends alone, but the government endeavoured to ward off the blow. A government vessel carried him to Malta, hoping that the climate would restore his shattered frame. A friend who was much in his company thus writes: "He was unfortunately careless as to what he ate and drank, especially the latter. On Monday he dined at the Chief Justice's, where I believe he partook too freely of porter and champagne."

As one reads these extracts, a sense of humiliation fills the soul, to think that a man of his reputation and powers of mind should be the slave of wine. We also feel indignant to think that social habits should be such as to expose this weakness to the public gaze. We are ready to curse in our lowest hearts those social customs that lay the foundations of dread diseases that hurry to untimely graves the noblest, that will expose and mock at the weakness of a poor old man as he reels and totters over the grave. Cursed be those social habits, which prepare such misery and then mock at the ruin they have wrought.

SECTION VI.

In the above quotation from Scott's letter to his son, there is one phrase that speaks volumes as to the effects of wine. He says, "Drinking what is called a certain quantity every day hurts the stomach, and by *hereditary descent yours is delicate.*" The evil effects of strong drink do not stop with the immediate victim, but descend to his posterity. Scott's son will not be able to drink as he did, for the son inherits the weakness that his father contracted by the use of wine. Scott was marked among his companions for abstinence, yet he undermined his health by drinking, and his son, as a consequence, inherits an enfeebled constitution. There is little doubt that many, if not most of our young men, who become drunkards, are such because of tendencies transmitted from parents. Many are thus made the heirs of disease.

This is a sad and painful subject. Take a circle in which there is health, youth, beauty, and intellect. They enjoy all the perquisites of youth. They make a free and liberal use of the good things of life, not the least of which is wine. They use it to impart generous emotions, quick and vigorous thoughts, bright imaginations, rich conceptions, and a ready utterance; but never overstepping the limits of propriety. Time passes on, and they become parents. With tenderness they watch over their little ones, until they

are ready to seek profit and enjoyment in society. As their parents did, so they introduce the wine cup. It is soon found that they cannot use it with the same freedom and steadiness. Unseemly things will occur. In some, an uncontrollable appetite is developed. With sorrow and shame are those parents compelled to acknowledge that their children do not possess self-control in the use of wine. They may or may not be conscious, that the cause of this weakness was produced in those happy scenes of their own youth, when the wine cup passed freely. Very frequently may parents look upon their drunken sons, and know that it is the sad result of their own indulgence in what they were wont to term a temperate, perhaps a wholesome, use of wine. This is a painful subject, and when we know that such is the case, we are disposed to hide it in our own breasts, and not pierce with a deeper sorrow hearts that are already bursting with a grief that knows no consolation. Still it is a solemn truth, that ought to be proclaimed with the voice of a trumpet, that many if not most drunkards are such because their parents have bequeathed to them a constitution which, when subjected to the influence of strong drink, is as if set on fire of hell. The soul trembles at the thought of a parent's eye meeting the gaze of a delirious son, and knowing that that delirium had its seat laid when in his own youth he trod the borders of excess.

SECTION VII

As we look upon the social circle around which wine freely passes, it requires but a slight effort of the imagination to see the form of the mocker standing near, looking on with a hideous grin as he thinks of the deception he will practise, and the ruin with which he will mock them. One's blood runs cold to think of the consequences that have followed from the free and joyous use of wine. *Those gay scenes in which not a shadow is seen, are the fountains whence flow the streams of bitter sorrow, of which those who are yet unborn must drink.* There is introduced the poison that is to transmit to children diseased bodies, and insatiable appetites, which will clothe in rags, cover with shame, and make them a curse to wives and little children,—which will fill their own minds with terror, and surround their dying-beds with unearthly visions.

This is no fiction. Mothers have often been compelled to witness just such scenes as they watched around the dying-bed of what was once a noble boy. The wife has thus watched the dying struggles of him whom she once proudly called husband. Little children have often been terrified by these unearthly scenes in the dying chamber of a father. Wine is a fearful mocker. It has deceived and robbed men in every conceivable way. It has stripped them of their property, given them painful disease, destroyed

their moral perceptions, weakened their intellectual powers, made them weak and imbecile, and transmitted to posterity disease, misery, and death. Such is the inheritance that wine has bequeathed to the children of men. Just for one moment think of the evil caused by strong drink.

The mind is unable to grasp the sum of the ruin that it has produced, or the woe that it has poured into the hearts and the homes of our people. It is enough to make one weep tears of blood to think of the works of the mocker, or to reckon the sum thereof.

Where shall we begin?

First we notice the agony of the victims themselves as they struggle to be free.

Then we think of parents mourning for ruined children.

Then of wives compelled to see their husbands daily sink lower. Little children compelled to witness a father's brutalities, often to breathe the very atmosphere of hell; to suffer cold and hunger that the father may have wherewith to feed an unholy appetite.

Then we must reckon the deeds of drunken men, brawls, fires, murders, disasters caused by drunken drivers, engineers, conductors, drunken physicians and surgeons, drunken commanders on sea and land. From every side there comes up a voice of wailing because of the ruin that wine has wrought. Yet for

all this men love it still, keep it in their houses, give it to their children, offer it to their friends.

"O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason."

We call upon you, parents, to beware of this mocker.

We warn you, young men, that he has laid his snare for your feet. We warn young women that wine is a mocker that revels in the tears and the agony of a drunkard's wife, and that he will laugh and gibe at her and her little ones as they cower before the coming storm.

Almighty and everlasting God, look down with pity on thy sorrowing children. For Christ's sake pity the drunkard, and by thy Holy Spirit heal him. Pity, O God, his wife and little children. Shield them beneath the shadow of thy wings. Father in heaven, save us from the Mocker. Let him not have dominion over us. Hear us for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THE VANTAGE-GROUND.

It is well to occupy the vantage-ground. The wise and skilful will seek to possess it. This is important in temporal things; but it is all-important in religious matters. Let us examine the ground upon which the Christian stands, and see if he does not occupy a place superior to all others. Skeptics may imagine their positions impregnable, errorists may boast of their strong fortifications, but does not the Christian stand on ground firmer, better, safer than all these? Let us see.

Should *any* system of belief that does not accord with evangelical truth be able to stand the test of the final day, even in that case the Christian is secure. For example: Should *Universalism* be true, and all eventually be saved, then, of course, the Christian will not be lost. Admitting, for argument's sake, that this doctrine is true, still the Christian must be safe.

Should *Infidelity* be right, the Bible a fiction, a mere human fabrication, and man under no obligation to obey its commands or practise its precepts; but, "like the beasts that perish," with no future rewards to crave or punishments to fear: yet on this supposition the Christian is the gainer, for true piety carries blessings with itself, making its possessor contented and happy. "Godliness is profitable unto all things,

having the promise of the life *that now is*," as well as "that which is to come." The believer in Christ hazards nothing; and yet, since so much doubt must remain about the truth of infidelity, he may gain every thing.

Should *Atheism* be true, and there be no God, no Creator, no providential care exercised over the universe, so that all things happen by chance, then, to say the least, the Christian's chances are equal to all others. But, with the evidences of design so marked and so abundant in nature indicating the existence of a Supreme Being, is not his position better and safer than that of the Atheist?

Should the *Moralist* be saved and made meet for heaven on the merit of good works, without a change of heart, how much more hope is there for him who has seen and felt himself a lost sinner, who has sought and obtained pardon through the blood and righteousness of Christ, since true religion comprehends purity of life, holiness of heart, and supreme love to God. The true believer, then, must be safer than the mere moralist, as certainly as the whole is greater than a part.

Should the triumph of the Christian over death and the grave be visionary, a delusion, as some imagine, yet the gain is his: for, as a skeptic once felt compelled to say while witnessing the happy death of a believer, "It is a blessed, *blessed* delusion." How much better thus to die than to feel that dying is "a leap into the dark," as once said a celebrated infidel when dying.

Many, enjoying life and health, deny a divine reality in true piety, calling it "merely ideal;" yet,

when dangers surround them—when death stares them in the face—they too would be pious—they would "die the death of the righteous," and have their "last end like his."

Now whose foundation is firmer, better, safer,—that of the irreligious man, or that of the Christian? "Discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not," and what is the intelligent conclusion? The former is safe from all hazards, with the blessed hope of a glorious immortality—the latter runs the awful risk of losing, irrevocably and eternally, his precious, priceless soul. From every standpoint whence we view the Christian, in every position in which we place him, with whomsoever we compare him, all must acknowledge that his is emphatically *the vantage-ground.*

Reader: Are you yet in the perplexities of doubt and unbelief concerning Christianity? Have you listened to skeptics, and scoffers, and the suggestions of your own heart, until you are almost ready to cast away for ever the Bible and its holy teachings? Ere you do so, weigh well the advantages of the Christian. You know *he* is safe under all conceivable circumstances, safe beyond a doubt. No one else is, no one else can be. What course, therefore, do duty and your own interest point out for you? Is it not to lead a Christian life, to plant your feet firmly on this sure foundation, "the Rock of Ages," and secure its blessings for time and eternity? Your better judgment and your conscience answer, *Yes.* Remember, the gospel of Christ comes to you as a friend, as your best friend, as the very friend you need. It

offers the richest boons, it bestows the greatest blessings. Why refuse them? Why so reluctant to be blest? Be entreated, by the dearest interests of your immortal soul, to choose, and choose without delay, "that good part which shall not be taken away" from you.

But, reader, you may be a believer, and yet tempted, at times, to distrust the religion of the Bible, and Satan may throw out artful insinuations against Christianity to betray your confidence in it. Be "not ignorant of his devices." Has anything better been offered for your faith? Would you exchange this gospel for Paganism, or Mohammedanism, or anything else? No, no; for there is nothing better, nothing so good, nothing that has so blessed the world. And until something better is presented, it is the part of wisdom to cling to it with a dying grasp. Believer in Christ, give to the winds your doubts and misgivings. Cheer up! You have made a blessed choice, the best possible, for you are safe amidst all the vicissitudes and uncertainties of life, safe amidst "the arrows that fly by day and the pestilence that walketh in darkness," safe on battle fields, in gloomy prisons, in afflictions, in death itself, ever safe, eternally safe. Rest peacefully, then, in your faith and hope.

We have seen that the position of the Christian is superior to all others. He risks nothing, loses nothing, gains every thing. Who, oh! who would not be a Christian and stand on this VANTAGE-GROUND?

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

CHRISTIAN BREASTWORKS.

BY THE REV. H. M. BACON, CHAPLAIN IN THE U. S. ARMY.

I AM astonished at the amount of hard work performed by our army, during the present campaign. Time and again I have known the soldiers tramp all day with heavy loads on their backs, and then dig all night in the trenches and rifle-pits. Often they would march in line of battle, through dense undergrowth, (and all who have tried it, know how hard this is,) up and down hills, over creeks and swamps, and yet stop at the word of command and put up a line of works as cheerfully as if they had just come out of pleasant homes to their regular daily task. Some of these fortifications have been quite substantial, and all have been valuable as a protection against the shells and charges of our desperate foe. My own regiment has scarcely ever halted in line of battle, even for half an hour, without throwing up at least some temporary defence. Even now as I write these words, with skirmishing in front and cannonading near and far, on the right and on the left, I see those brave unyielding men working on the twenty-ninth line of works they have built in the last three months. They have got so now, that, without waiting to be told, they fall to work as soon as we stop at any point, which it is understood we must hold, or where we are liable to be attacked. I admire their thoughtful skill and cheerful energy in this respect, as much as I do their cool valour, and steady firmness in the day of battle.

I have thought, as a Christian, that I might learn something from them on this point. I too, am fighting a good fight. Do I not need to fortify? Should I ever stop, even for a short time, in the presence, open

or concealed, of any foe without seeking some shelter, or providing myself with some protection. I have known many a soldier of Christ to be sorely wounded and to suffer severely because he did not avail himself of such means of protection as his glorious Leader has provided. And I have learned in this campaign, that much depends upon knowing what materials to employ, and especially how to put them together. Let me tell you of some resources that are within the reach of the humblest and weakest child of God.

1. Foremost among all these I put *simple child-like trust in God.* Is there anything else that can give such calm strength, such a sense of safety, such an assurance of triumph as this confidence in God as our reconciled God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord? It makes no difference whether this feeling finds expression in prayer or praise, it makes our place of defence the munitions of rocks. No assault of the enemy need terrify us, no stray shot can reach us; for even trouble and disaster come to us directed by the hand of Him who doeth all things well. Brother soldier, it does not take long to put up this breastwork between us and every sorrow. We need only not forget the loving-kindness and faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God. Shall we not say with one of old, "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee?"

2. A second stronghold of the soldier of Christ is *the word of God.* This does not differ much from the one of which I have already spoken. Our faith in God must be scriptural, founded on God's own declarations and controlled by them, not wayward, capricious or unreasoning. It is the word of God which teaches and encourages us to confide in him. It is at once the source and the rule of our faith. But it is well to notice how full the Bible is in this regard both of precept and promise. We should have our memories stored with these gracious assurances, for they are the materials wherewith to construct fortifi-

cations, into which we can run and be safe. Attention and recollection are the implements, the picks and shovels with which to intrench ourselves, always carried with us, never lost, never left behind. Especially must this be kept in mind in the army, where we are so liable to be violently assailed or suddenly surprised, and cannot always find time to hunt up some passage of Scripture suited to our condition. But we may be always sure that just what we need is to be found in great abundance in the word of God. Let the man of God then be thoroughly furnished, and always ready to fortify at a moment's notice.

3. Another great help in our warfare is *association with good men.* Failure at this point has caused much, and perhaps most of the backsliding in camp. A man misses his family, the restraints of society, and the church. He is not careful to consort with the few disciples in his company, much less to hunt up those who are scattered through the regiment. He takes the associates chance throws in his way, and if, as too often happens, they are kind, but prayerless and reckless men, almost before he knows the fact, he has gone astray like a lost sheep. Nowhere does a man so much need to be a companion of them that fear God as in camp. Everywhere we should say, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for I will keep the commandments of my God." Nowhere can we carry coals of fire in our bosoms, and not be burned. But all this has special truth and force in the army. Here Christians need to speak often one to another. Let them not forget that a threefold cord is not soon broken.

4. The only further protection I can now speak of is *to keep fast hold of home and its influences.* Our friends and kindred can help us with letters and prayers, with messages of love to us, and messages of supplication to Him who setteth the solitary in families. The mother writing to her wayward son, the wife blotting her paper with her tears, the father ut-

tering weighty words of counsel, the sister pouring out her heart to the playmate of her childhood, little know how welcome and how powerful for good these letters are to every soldier worthy of the name. Many a rough-looking, sun-browned man has shown me his letter from home, and has told me in tremulous tones how anxious they were there that he should be a good man. Let these faithful sentinels of the household help in this way all they can. No small part of the soldier's confidence comes from the assurance that they pray for him. No small part of his strength comes from their loving, hopeful words. But, my fellow-soldiers, we have something to do in keeping up this line of defence. Let us not neglect our families. No true soldier will forget them. We are fighting for them, and they, in many ways, are struggling for you. In some respects they suffer even more than you do. Anxiety for you keeps them awake many a night while you are sleeping quietly. Prayers to God for the imperilled soldier go up hourly, nay, every moment, from many a lonely household. No true, brave man, who stops to think, will ever forget such helpers as these.

One more lesson I have learned in this campaign. I see the men of my regiment grow every day more careful of their tools. No matter at what hour of the night they start, or how hot the sun shines, or how tired they get, they will not throw away assistance so often tried, so constantly needed. Are we learning thus to be more thoughtful and vigilant? As this victorious army has ploughed and ridged its way across this vast tract of hotly-contested country, so let us all mark our path through life with a succession of triumphant defences against the wiles and assaults of the devil.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

WHAT ARE YOU LIVING FOR?

LIFE is a solemn reality. Call it a dream, a vapour, a vanity, or whatever you may, when viewed in certain aspects, it is nevertheless freighted with the most mighty consequences which the human intellect can weigh. It means power for good or evil; it means progress in right or wrong; it means triumphant success or the sadness of endless failure; it means either all that is glorious or all that is awful in time and in eternity. It means a man on trial as to his eternal destiny, and that man yourself. You may live along, absorbed in the cares of the world, and seldom think that the life of your body and of your soul and of all your mental powers is involved in the conduct and decisions of the present, but this thoughtlessness neither alters nor postpones the fact, and I fear lest you may wake up to the solemn reality, only when it is all too late.

Upon your belief and actions here, depends your life; not merely that of a few years which disease may distress, or death dissolve, upon which fortune may smile or misfortune frown, but the life for ever —the life which now is and that which is to come— its future as unending as God, to be as happy as that of Jesus and his saints ineffable in glory, or as unutterably terrible as that of the devil and his angels, who have weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth— sorrow—agony—despair—all endless.

Each man's life has its central idea. With one it is *worldly pleasure*. He lives in a worldly sense to enjoy himself. He revels in the delight of his carnal appetite, gives free scope to his fallen human nature, makes mere passing pleasure his god, and often, alas!

in this world, so drinks the dregs of his own cup as to taste its bitterness and die unsatisfied.

With another it is *wealth*. His life is for coinage. With ceaseless toil he grasps the gold. Often it eludes his effort, but if obtained, it is but gold. It cannot fill the soul with happiness. It has not in it an atom of the joy and the peace of believing. It has no everlasting portion, and when thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be? "So is he who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Another still is wont to feed on *fame*. Honour shouts, but honour dies. Ambition cries, "give, give," but never says, "enough." If you have not the honour which is from above, it is all of earth, and like it will roll away as a scroll.

Others live, as they say, *to make a living*. They have no other end in view except to secure food and raiment and an earthly home. All these are well, but the fault of such is, that to them life means nothing else. The Great Giver is not consulted in their self-trusting plans. They forget to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and then, in their labour, to trust alone in him who has promised to add all necessary things. They diligently prepare for the body, but not for the soul; for comfort here, and for sad discomfort in the hereafter; for a dwelling-place on earth, but when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they will have no building with God eternal in the heavens: Houseless and homeless for ever, the pitiless storm of Divine wrath must then be poured upon them.

Others are all absorbed, in their *business*, their *amusements*, their *friends*, their *children* or *themselves*, and seem to live for nothing else. God and his word, providence, experience and common sense, mighty and truthful teachers, declare all such to be missing the great aim of life.

What are you living for? Are any such your

centres of attraction? Are you fulfilling the true idea of life? Do you connect the life which now is with that which is to come? Oh, how beggarly are the elements of the world, where there is nothing else to live upon! That you are living at all is a great mercy. Your life was not meant to be a mere existence, a neutrality or a failure. Life is a positive thing. It is full of fruit either blasted or going on to perfection. Rightly spent it has abundant harvests of all manner of precious seeds, and he that soweth gathereth unto everlasting life. There is in it a reality of spiritual comfort and abiding luxury. But remember that the only kind of life which is genuine and true is that which is by faith upon the Son of God. If you are living primarily and chiefly for any other object than to please God and keep his commandments, you are living worse than in vain.

If you have not made your peace with him, if you have never bowed before him with a sense of sinfulness and helplessness, and looked to him for pardon alone through the merit and sacrifice of Christ Jesus, our Lord, your life is thus far misdirected. You are without hope and without God in the world, amid the outer darkness of unforgiven guilt, dead in trespasses and sins, having only a name to live. Like the Roman criminals of old, you are chained to a dead body, in contact with which you will drag along a sad pilgrimage, unless you seek refuge in the arms of Immanuel, and be rid of it. Oh then be no longer living thus! Pant for newness of life. Begin at once to use all the means of grace. Plead alone with God and be not weary, for it is for your precious life.

Whoever you are, my dear reader, whether in the church or out of it, seek to be alive with the vitality of grace. Daily live for God and humanity. Be at work with all the earnestness of a spiritual interest, of a personal concern, of an outgushing love. Know well what you are living for, and be sure that Christ and his salvation are uppermost in your

hearts. Be living to do good, to be good, to get good, to be happy and make others happy, to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever. This is life in earnest, a substance, a sublime vitality, having a glowing present and a glorious future. For this you, high or low, sick or well, rich or poor, honoured or forsaken, may be living.

Such is the higher life, the Christian's life, the only one that is not fearful. It may have its struggles, but its conflicts will all end in victories. Christ himself has died, that ye might have this life. He is a fountain of life. If ye drink, he shall be unto you a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. I pray you be living for this life. Forsake the desolated poverty of all the poor livings of this world, upon which is written *death*, and accept the life which grace imparts. Thus only may you be in possession of a true life here, and be ready at its close to enter into the presence of Him with whom is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Ye who are living for this, live stronger in faith, live faster in effort, live deeper in love. Oh ye who are not, I beg you no longer delay, but eat of the fruit of the tree of life which is for the healing of the nations, ere time sweeps you beyond its reach, and the gloom of unpardoned sin settles in blackness of darkness about your hopeless destiny.

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VACANT PLACES AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

THE QUESTION CONSIDERED, WHY SO MANY OF THE CHURCH'S CHILDREN FAIL TO COME INTO THE CHURCH'S COMMUNION.

By the Rev. N. C. BURT, D. D.

In countries which are not Christian, the people, as a general rule, are all religious. Whatever may be the prevalent form of religion, the whole population adhere to it and practise it. The old and the young, of all classes and conditions, are, so to speak, active members of the church. There are no unbelievers, no dissenters, none who are indifferent to religion. Religion, too, descends from one generation to another, and continues universally prevalent from age to age.

This is true, not only of Pagan countries, but also of those which are Mohammedan. When, in these countries, the Muezzin sounds from the mosque the signal for prayer, which occurs five times a day, the whole population instantly cease from their occupations and observe the prescribed devotions. When the annual fast of the month Ramadan occurs, with one consent the entire people are found complying with its self-denying requirements.

Much the same is true of Roman and Greek Catholic countries. All persons, with great promptness and much seeming devotion, attend church, partake of the sacraments, observe appointed fasts and feasts, and, in the only way in which they have learned religion, are religious Children follow their

parents, and, by teaching and training, these corrupted forms of religion are successfully propagated.

When, however, we come to Protestant Christian countries, we find the case to be very different. We *call* these countries Christian, and so, in a certain sense, they *are* Christian. In a sense the religion of the country *is* that of Protestant Christianity. The Bible has a general circulation, and the church exerts an extended influence. The customs of society are modified by religion, and the laws of the land are framed with a recognition of the fact that the public conscience approves of our Protestant Christianity. Yet, in Protestant countries, the prevalent religion by no means exerts that commanding and universal influence upon individuals which is seen elsewhere. Probably not one-half the people, possibly not one-third or one-fourth, habitually attend church, or profess to be, in any proper sense, worshippers of God. And of those who do attend church and who aid in upholding the institutions of religion, a large proportion fail to profess that they have any personal interest in religious things, and decline taking any active part in the performance of religious duties. Of the thirty millions of people in our land, probably less than three millions are to be found in the communion of our Protestant churches. Thus, in Protestant countries, religion, instead of coming into prominence and receiving universal regard, is thrust into the background or passed by with indifference; its highest claims being refused or its very existence practically ignored by the great majority of the people.

The strange feature in this consideration is the fact that, by common consent, the Christian re-

ligion, in the Protestant form of it, is regarded in Protestant lands as infinitely superior to all other forms of religion. It is regarded as the only true religion, other forms of faith being considered as false and debasing superstitions. It is regarded, too, as the substantial basis, the moving spirit and crowning glory of our advanced and advancing civilization. The strange thing is that, in countries where false and degrading religions prevail, all the people should receive and conform to them, but that in countries which claim to have the only true and desirable religion, that religion should be neglected or despised by the great body of the people.

This feature has, indeed, a still stranger aspect, deserving especial attention. In our Protestant Christian countries, children born within the pale of the church, born of those who are members of the church, are in general regarded as themselves members of the church. They are members by birth, and to them, in consequence, are accorded birth-rights and special privileges. They are recognized as children of the church, both by their parents and by the church itself, in nearly all denominations, in the solemn ordinance of baptism, and a special religious training is pledged to them. The best influences of the church are sought to be thrown over these children from their very infancy onward, indirectly but most powerfully through their parents, and directly by catechizings and Sabbath-school instructions, by pastoral acquaintance and influence, and by the public ordinances of God's house; so that these children may grow up as Christians, may learn to love the church, and may be prepared to take their part in the church and enjoy

full Christian privileges as church members when they shall come to suitable years.

And the strange thing is that many, very many, of the children of pious parents, children of the church, children taught and trained in the doctrines and duties of religion, when they come to years of understanding, instead of eagerly embracing their privilege of coming into full communion with the church, instead of recognizing themselves as members of the church and hastening to enter upon the suitable discharge of the duties growing out of this relation, very commonly exhibit an indifference to the whole matter, oftentimes a positive reluctance to identify themselves any more closely with the church to which they belong, and even a willingness to go from her fold altogether, leaving their parents, their pastors, their Sabbath-schools and the services of God's house, and identifying themselves with those who have no regard for the church or religion, with an unbelieving and disobedient world.

How many of those in our ordinary Sabbath assemblies are members of the church by birth and baptism and Christian nurture, and have been urged and entreated not to deny this membership, not to resist the influences which have arisen out of it; have been urged and entreated time and again to take their place in the church, to come into the communion of the church and the full fellowship and service of its members; yet are still living and acting as though they had no part nor lot in the matter, no obligations resting on them, no privileges open to them! And how many others of these church members are not to be found in any Christian assembly on the Sabbath!

Their parents may be there, but they have separated themselves from their parents; or their parents may have gone from earth, having laid affectionate injunction upon them even in death to follow their own Christian example, and as sainted ones they may now in heaven be watching over the wandering footsteps of their unfaithful children.

Is there not an unspeakable strangeness and sadness in this feature of the subject? The conduct described has, indeed, the seeming of *apostasy*. In some instances this dread sin may not properly be charged. In some instances, children of the church may fail to take their place in the church, under mistaken views of duty, as we shall by and by see. But, in general, for those who have been born and nurtured in the bosom of the church to refuse to take upon them the Christian profession when they become capable of acting for themselves; for them to take up and deliberately maintain a position outside the church's communion, thus identifying themselves with the world as opposed to the church, and thus not only denying their own Christian birth and baptism and nurture, but also cutting off from these the children who may come after them—stopping God's gracious entail of salvation; this, beyond question, is *dreadful sin*. It has both the appearance and the reality of apostasy. Those who are guilty of it, act so as to undo all that has ever been done for them of a Christian sort. They cast away their birthright in the Church of God. They wipe from their brows the consecrated water which sealed them as lambs of the fold of Christ. They obliterate from their minds and hearts the pious counsels of parents and pastors and

Sabbath-school teachers. They consent to act as though there were no God, no church of God, and no membership in that church, with either duties or privileges. And if this be not apostasy, pray what is it?

The question is one of great interest and importance, how this strange condition of things is to be explained. Let us, with a hope of some practical benefit to ourselves, whether we be parents or children, but especially if we be the children of pious parents and of the church, consider what are the chief reasons probably operating to produce these results.

1. It may be the case that some of the baptized members of the church who have reached mature years, fail to unite themselves with the communion of the church and make a personal profession of faith, for the reason that they entertain mistaken views concerning the necessity of a *striking conversion.* Indeed we are strongly inclined to believe that the number is large with whom this reason operates. Perhaps most of the non-communicants who read these pages may belong to the number. Would that they might be brought to think and act in this matter according to the sober truth!

Some persons of this class no doubt feel that they would be glad to carry out the intentions of their parents, and assume for themselves the vows of religion; but they think that they have not had a suitable religious experience, and that therefore the way is not open to them. And such persons, it may be, *have had* a suitable experience, and *are* qualified for admission to the communion of God's people, did they but know it. They have been unwarrantably

led to expect that, at some time or other, they might be brought to highly-wrought convictions for sin and to a sudden revolution in their feelings, which they regard as a change of heart, and that only *then* would they be permitted to account themselves true Christians, and to take their place among the professed people of God.

Now, upon this most interesting point, we need to think very carefully. Yet, endeavouring to do so, we need not hesitate to say, that on the one hand, while, beyond all doubt, none are qualified for a place in the communion of God's people except those who have been truly regenerated; on the other hand, the opinion that those who have been given to God in infancy, and have been taught and trained in the ways of piety, are to expect a sudden and striking conversion, and are to wait until this is felt, before accounting themselves true Christians, does not seem to have any sufficient warrant in Scripture, or reason, or experience. Such a conversion may more reasonably be looked for in the case of the grossly ignorant and profanely wicked. With the children of the church, such a conversion may properly be regarded as a rare exception. In their case, it should rather be expected that, as they grow up, the saving knowledge of Christ will gradually dawn on their minds, and their hearts will more and more incline to the ways of God's service. And this being the case, the critical moment in which they truly begin the Christian life may not be so marked as strongly to evidence itself either to themselves or others.

We can hardly be wrong in saying that if any such, on coming to years of discretion, find themselves cor-

dially approving and accepting the way of salvation through Christ, and desirous of participating in the privileges of the Christian, and willing and resolved to lead the self-denying life of piety, here is proof sufficient that they have already experienced a change of heart, and it is their duty and privilege to identify themselves with the people of God, without delay. And if any, through the mistaken view referred to, have been kept for many years from making a profession of religion, it is their duty and privilege, whenever they discover their mistake, *at once* to correct it and to cease from occupying a false position. It is their duty and privilege *at once* to take the position which belongs to them, within the communion of the church, thankfully owning the God of their fathers.

2. Another reason, of a more radical sort, which probably operates with controlling power in a still larger number of cases, keeping the baptized members of the church from taking their places in the communion of the church, is *the want of heart* for such a step. And this want of heart is due to the fact that the Christian religion is in its nature spiritual and pure, while the heart is naturally alienated from what is pure and spiritual. Even the children of the most godly parents have a natural aversion to the ways of godliness. They have a natural inclination toward the things of self and the world and sin, towards the very things which religion disallows and condemns. They have, it may be, a very passion for these, and cannot be persuaded to abandon them. Religion seems to such a sombre and forbidding thing. Its requirements are painful, its services irksome.

And here is one great secret of the difference between all other religions and that of the Bible. Other religions accommodate themselves to the natural tendencies of our corrupt hearts. It is easy to practise them. A religion of mere forms and shows, of mere fasts and feasts, of mere bended knees and muttered prayers, is not so uncongenial that our repugnance to it may not be overcome, through the entertainment it may afford the senses and imagination, and through the power it may possess to pacify the conscience, which demands a religion of some sort. And, in lands not purely Christian, it is no marvel that the great body of the people are religious, and that religion descends from generation to generation. But the Christian religion, laying direct hold upon the heart, and demanding that its supreme affections be given to that for which it has no natural preference but rather the strongest aversion, it is no wonder that many refuse its claims. It is no wonder that of those earliest trained to its observances, and taught its doctrines, and sought to be brought under its power, many should prove intractable, resisting its influences and refusing its claims. Indeed, the great wonder is that any should do otherwise. Yet, when we know that the Christian religion is the religion of truth and righteousness and love, that it is all excellent and supremely excellent, this tendency to resist and refuse it becomes the strongest evidence possible of the desperate wickedness of the heart. And this is the point which we would here press upon our readers who have had a Christian training yet have never given themselves to Christ. Failing to yield themselves to the requirements of

religion, notwithstanding all the many influences and incentives which have conspired to urge them upon doing so,—influences and incentives which operate elsewhere with controlling power—the very fact should alarm them—it should arouse them to an appreciation of a desperate wickedness of the heart, demanding the regenerating power of this very religion to remove it, before it becomes their ruin.

3. So far as we have gone, it has been taken for granted that the training of the children of the church, as a matter of fact, is just what it ought to be. We have been answering the question, why the children of the church, although suitably trained, are found in great numbers renouncing their obligations and privileges as church members. Yet it cannot properly be taken for granted that the training of the church's children is, in general, such as is demanded. And in answering the question, why the children of the church, as the case actually stands, so often refuse their proper place in the church's communion, it would be necessary to give as a further reason *the unfaithfulness or inefficiency of the church and of Christian parents in the Christian nurture of their children.* The great advantage of a birthright and of baptism in the church, is to be found in the fact that these pledge, and are intended to secure, a Christian education to those who enjoy them. The covenant of God, in which he engages to be the God of his people's offspring, has full respect to the children's suitable nurture. God promises to bless the children of pious parents and of the church with the gifts of his grace, only on the condition that the in-

fluence of the parents and of the church be employed in bringing up these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A mere birthright is nothing. Mere baptism is nothing. What does it signify that a child is born of parents who happen to be professors of religion, if they recognize no Christian obligations in behalf of their child? And what charm is there in sprinkling a little water over the face of an infant, in the name of the triune God, that of itself it should make the child a Christian? No: everything, under God, depends upon the recognition and fulfilment of the obligations herein implied of training the child in the ways of piety. And God has engaged, that when these obligations are faithfully fulfilled he will make the Christian training effectual for salvation. He will accompany it with the power of his Spirit, causing it to overcome even the strong natural repugnance of the heart to the things of religion, disposing and enabling the child to choose and follow, with delight, the ways of piety.

And in this great matter, oh how delinquent are both churches and parents! How we baptize our children, and then let them go, not regarding nor treating them as members of the church, failing to expect or pray that they may grow up as children of God's covenant, but only venturing to hope that by and by, when they have learned by experience the folly and bitterness of sin, they will be rescued from the ways of transgression and suddenly converted to God, and then come, like those who all their lives have been strangers or heathen, and, as the phrase goes, "join the church!" Is it any wonder that comparatively few of the children of the church

promptly come into the communion of God's people, on reaching the years of discretion?

Here, doubtless, is a grievous *wrong*. This state of things *ought* not to exist. It should be the rule, with only rare exceptions, that the baptized members of the church, so fast as they reach the years of understanding, be found taking their places at the Lord's table and engaging actively in the duties of the Christian profession. The exceptions ought to be so rare as to stand forth in prominence, exciting general surprise and grief. God's covenant with his people, in behalf of their children, contemplates this. Parental and church influence faithfully exerted, are, under God's hand, sufficient to secure it.

Our church standards take for granted that the children of the church will grow up in the ways of piety. The language of our Directory, on "the admission of persons to sealing ordinances," runs thus: "Children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church; and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, the Apostles' creed and the Lord's prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Supper." Thus it is presumed that the children of the church, suitably nurtured, will grow up religiously, and, unless they give positive evidences of a want of piety, they are to be invited to the

Lord's table when they become capable of acting for themselves.

Should not parents and churches, as they look upon the sad spectacle of their children renouncing the God of their fathers and the God of the covenant, take to themselves a large measure of the responsibility; and, in view of all the many and mighty incentives to fidelity, should they not engage with new and increasing zeal in bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Perhaps these pages will be read by some of the church's children who have enjoyed the advantages of a religious training, in a good measure faithful, and who still are standing aloof from the church's communion. May we not address a word directly to such?

Some of you, it may be, are advancing far in life. You came to the age of discretion many years since. Communion season after communion season has come and gone, in the churches you have attended, yet your place at the Lord's table, among your Christian friends and in the presence of your Saviour, has waited for you in vain. Your parents, who gave you to God in baptism, who brought you with them to the house of God, who taught you to pray, and who often wrestled with God for your salvation with strong crying and tears, have been sorely disappointed. In the most solemn and delightful exercise of their lives, you have not been with them, and the continued separation has alarmed them with the thought of a separation for ever. Perhaps those parents have already gone to their heavenly home, having died without the sight of your conversion, and anx-

ious, even in death, that you might, without delay, give your hearts to the Lord and to his church. And the church, into whose fold you were once tenderly and solemnly received, and whose counsels and prayers, in your behalf, have been unceasing through many long years, is also sorely disappointed. If her own children forsake her communion, how can she have hope for those who are strangers? The ways of Zion mourn through your neglect to come to her solemn feasts.

Now, why is this? Why has it so long continued? And shall it still longer continue? With the full and familiar knowledge of the way of duty and of life, why should you not at once enter upon that way? And why should you not, when the next communion season in your church occurs, be found in your place at the Lord's table?

Some of you, again, have only just reached the years of maturity. Oh that you might be persuaded, young though you be, not to delay for a single communion season to assume the vows of the Christian profession. Lambs of the fold, you need the church's kind protection. Young and vigorous in life, the church needs your energies. At once identify yourselves, heart and life, with the church to which you already belong. Place yourselves by your parents' side and follow in your parents' footsteps, each of you crying, "My father's God, I will exalt him."

Painful are the thoughts which this subject must suggest to some Christian parents. The grief of years is excited afresh, grief, perhaps, not unmingled with self-reproach, at the thought of some long wan-

dering child. To each of you a single word. You think of your own unfaithfulness. Well, perhaps you have been unfaithful. Yet our God is merciful. And his covenant with you in behalf of your child is a covenant of friendship. He feels for you in all your grief. He is concerned for your wandering one. And, be assured, he treasures up your every prayer in that child's behalf. If, in all good conscience, you have sought to discharge parental duty, then, with equally good hope, you may await your child's restoration to God's fold. And if you cannot but feel that you have been sadly wanting in parental fidelity, *even that* God is ready to forgive, and he will still hear your prayers and grant you the desire of your heart, if only consistent with his own honour. Still plead the covenant of God's love; yet learn to say, even in reference to a darling's destiny, "Thy will be done."

EXCELLENCE OF RELIGION.

RELIGION is the chief concern
Of mortals here below;
May I its great importance learn,
Its sovereign virtue know!

More needful this, than glittering wealth
Or aught the world bestows;
Nor reputation, food nor health,
Can give us such repose.

Religion should our thoughts engage,
Amidst our youthful bloom;
'Twill fit us for declining age,
And for the awful tomb.

O may my heart, by grace renewed,
Be my Redeemer's throne;
And be my stubborn will subdued,
His government to own.

Let deep repentance, faith, and love,
Be joined with godly fear;
And all my conversation prove
My heart to be sincere.

IS THERE HOPE?

By the Rev. W. J. McCORD.

Hope for sinful men? This the burdened sinner wants to know. He feels that he is perishing, and he asks for a way of escape. Is there hope? There is none in himself, none in any creature, none but in the atonement of Jesus Christ. But is there an atonement? Some deny it, or hold it only in some mystical sense which few can comprehend. What we need is a personal Saviour, one who has made a real satisfaction for sin; and such a Saviour we must have, or there is no hope for man. Some affirm that Christ died only as an example, as a martyr, or as a witness to the truth. But he died as something more than all this, or there is no hope: he died as an atoning sacrifice, and thus to open the door of hope to the perishing.

Reader, your hopes for eternity are suspended upon this truth, that Jesus Christ has satisfied the justice of God by his sufferings in your stead; and if this be not so, then there is for you no hope! Then is there an atonement—not some shadowy nothing on which no man can rest—but a true and proper satisfaction

to the justice of God in its true and proper sense? Is this so; and hence is there hope?

This is taught in all those passages of Scripture which speak of Christ as a propitiation for sin. Thus in Romans iii. 24–26, Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. In 1 John ii. 2, it is written, And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Again in 1 John iv. 10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He is a propitiation, a propitiatory sacrifice, a sacrifice offered to God for sin, through which God can be propitious and consistently forgive and save.

The same is taught in those Scriptures which speak of Christ as a ransom. Thus in 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. In Matt. xx. 28, it is written, The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many; and the same in Mark x. 45.

Here we learn that Christ gave himself a ransom—a ransom-price for our redemption. This he did when he was offered upon the cross for our sins.

The same is taught in all those passages which declare that we are redeemed by Christ. Christ is more than an example; he is our Redeemer. He redeems his people from all iniquity and saves them from their sins. This he does by giving himself a ransom, making an atonement, the application of which secures the redemption of his people; and hence he is called their redemption in 1 Cor. i. 30,—He of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. In whom we have redemption through his blood. Eph. i. 7. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13.

Redeemed! Then there is hope! This is taught in those passages which speak of Christ as our Substitute. If he has taken our place, it is that he might deliver us by his own death in our stead. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all:—for the transgression of my people was he stricken.—He bare the sin of many. Isa. liii. 4–12. In Dan. ix. 26, it is written, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.

Not for himself! Why then was he cut off? It was to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness, as in verse 24. This he did when he was crucified; for he is our peace, having made peace through the blood of his cross. Col. i. 19, 20. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this evil world; who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree. Gal. i. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 24. If he has borne our sins, then they may be forgiven. Hence we are said to be forgiven and saved for the sake of Christ or in his name. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts iv. 12. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. Acts xiii. 38, 39. Christ has died; and he lives to intercede. His intercession is based upon his atonement; and through it we also have access to God. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. John xvi. 23. All the sacrifices under the law teach the doctrine of atonement and speak the language of hope. They were figures of good things to come. They pointed to the death of Christ as an all-sufficient sacrifice, and they all say of him, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. John i. 29.

The Bible is full of encouragement to inquiring and burdened sinners, because it is full of Christ crucified. The doctrine of Christ's atonement is so interwoven with the very framework of the Scriptures, that there is scarcely a chapter in which there is not some allusion to it. It is taught in all those passages which speak of Christ's suffering and dying for us and for our sins, and in a multitude of others. The law and the prophets and the psalms, as well as the gospels, are full of Christ and of life through him. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. 1 Cor. v. 7. Christ hath loved us and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Eph. v. 2. Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Heb. xiii. 12. The cross of Christ and Christ crucified were the burden of the apostles' messages. They preached a crucified Saviour; and why? Because Christ crucified is an atonement for sin, a propitiatory sacrifice, through whom we may have access to God and forgiveness of sins. Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

There is hope, because there is an atonement. The cross of Christ illuminates the darkness in which the fall of man enveloped the world; it opens the gate

of mercy to the lost, the door of hope to the despairing.

In making the atonement, Christ Jesus was perfectly voluntary. He gave himself. He undertook our case of his own accord. There was no constraint. He laid down his life freely for our sakes. This encourages hope, and it also meets an objection. Jesus Christ was holy, spotless, pure; he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He was innocent. Yet he suffered for the guilty, the just for the unjust. Is this proper and right? Is it consistent with justice and propriety? It would be manifestly unjust to oblige the innocent to suffer for the guilty; but where the innocent freely offers to suffer for the guilty, and the offer is accepted, there is no wrong done to the innocent. Christ was voluntary; he gave himself; and there was no injustice. His suffering in our stead was above justice, but not contrary to it. The atonement is above law, but not contrary to law; the sufferings of Christ, the just for the unjust, being voluntary, were above justice, but not contrary to justice—they were a satisfaction to justice for us and in our stead, that we might be forgiven and have hope.

He was made of a woman, made under the law. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross Heb. v. 8 Phil. ii. 6–8. That law which we had broken, he

obeyed, honoured, magnified. His obedience was a part of his atonement; it was necessary to render him a proper victim for sacrifice, a Lamb without spot. That justice might be satisfied, an atonement made, the door of hope opened, the law must be obeyed and honoured by our Substitute. This Christ has done. Yet he has not so obeyed for us as to free us from obligation to obey. We are to take it as our rule of life and follow the example of Christ,

"In whose life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters."

Christ suffered for our sins; not his, but ours. Thus in 1 Pet. ii. 21, Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. He suffered by privations, by poverty, by temptations, by toils and labours, by his agony in the garden, by scourging, by crucifixion, by the wrath of God, the hidings of his Father's face, the burdens of our sins which he bare, the whole curse of the law. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Isa. liii. 3. His sufferings were both bodily and mental; but the sufferings of his soul far out-

weighed those of his body. He made his soul an offering for sin. He was troubled in spirit. His soul was sorrowful unto death. As the Captain of our salvation, he was made perfect through sufferings.

He died! Died for our sins! His sufferings terminated in death. He shed his blood upon the cross. Thus in Rom. v. 6–8, For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly; for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He says in John x. 15–17, As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. He died the shameful and painful death of the cross; he was nailed to the accursed tree, and thus was made a curse for us. And when he could say, It is finished—the work of atonement is accomplished—he gave up the ghost.

Reader! All this I have said that you might know there is hope. There is hope because there is an atonement for sin. This has been made by Jesus Christ the Mediator at vast expense. He gave himself a ransom. That ransom he gave for you, reader, for you, if you will only believe! He died for your sins. Will you receive him, that you may hope in his

mercy? Sin is a burden. You are ready to despair. Yet there is hope in Jesus Christ. His blood has been shed; and he invites you to his arms. Will you come? Will you accept the great salvation which he has purchased with his blood?

You need this salvation. Without it you must perish. Will you accept it as it is freely offered to you? Will you look to Christ by faith, and thus lay hold of the hope set before you? or will you continue in sin and sink down in despair? Will you come to Christ? or do you say, Have me excused? Excused! when this is your only hope? Do you wish to be excused from an interest in Jesus Christ? Excused from securing the salvation of your soul and a title to heaven? Excused from pardon, and from occupying a seat with the blessed?

If not, from what do you wish to be excused? Is it from peace with God? from joy in his love? from the pleasures of religion? the hope of immortality? the death of the righteous? Or is it from faith in Christ and the duties which God requires and which religion enjoins? But without faith in Christ and the performance of these duties you cannot cherish the hope of heaven! Then why ask, Is there hope? There is no hope out of Christ! None! Nothing but remorse and despair! Sin must be repented of and forsaken; faith must be exercised in Jesus Christ; or the gates of heaven can never be opened to you!

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Never! Christ must be received, and his atonement rested in, or there is no forgiveness! None! Never. And yet you wish to be excused!

And for what do you wish to be excused? That you may keep your sins? that you may heap up the perishing treasures of this world? that you may indulge in all evil without restraint? Look at the cross of Christ! See that bleeding victim! witness his agony! his sighs and tears! his dying groans! and remember that to trifle with sin is to trifle with the sorrows of Jesus! And can you trifle with sin any longer? Can you indulge in it? Will you not loathe it and forsake it? And will you not love that Jesus who suffered thus for you? who gave himself a ransom? who died to give you hope? Embrace him by faith, that you may become reconciled to God. Flee to him now, and your burden of sin will be gone. Oh flee now! Soon the day of mercy and of hope will close for ever. Then it will be too late to flee; the doom of the ungodly will then be yours: the prison-house of despair must then be your eternal dwelling: for the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.

"Ah, guilty sinner, ruined by transgression,
What shall thy doom be, when arrayed in terror,
God shall command thee, covered with pollution,
Up to the judgment?

"Wilt thou escape from his omniscient notice,
Fly to the caverns, court annihilation?
Vain thy presumption; justice still shall triumph
In thy destruction!"

Destruction! Can you escape it? Is there hope? Reader, listen! If you would escape eternal destruction, you must avail yourself of the Saviour's atoning sacrifice; you must come to Christ; and you must come now! Now is the time! Now forsake your sins, now believe in Christ, now cast yourself on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Now! Now!

"Come, then, poor sinner, come away this moment,
Just as you are, come, filthy and polluted,
Come to the Fountain open for uncleanness:
Jesus invites you!"

Yes, Jesus invites you! He died to save! Come! He says, Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out. There is hope. Come! Come now! Repent, believe, obey, and you shall live for ever!

"Come, seize the promise while it waits,
And march to Zion's heavenly gates;
Believe, and take the promised rest;
Obey, and be for ever blest!"

Come, for there is hope! Delay, and there is despair and death! Come!

HYMN.

SPRINKLED with reconciling blood,
I dare approach thy throne, O God!
Thy face no frowning aspect wears,
Thy hand no vengeful thunder bears.

The encircling rainbow, peaceful sign,
Does with refulgent brightness shine;
And while by faith I see it near,
I bid farewell to every fear.

Let me my grateful homage pay;
With courage sing, with fervour pray;
And though myself a wretch undone,
Hope for acceptance through thy Son:—

Thy Son, who on the accursed tree,
Expired to set the vilest free:
On this I build my only claim,
And all I ask is in his name.

A TEMPERANCE TRACT.

THE two papers given below, were adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, at its sessions in the City of Pittsburgh, Pa., May 31, 1865, and were referred by a vote of the Assembly to the Board of Publication, to be published as a tract.

The first paper was reported to the Assembly by the Rev. James Wood, D.D., Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures. The second was offered by the Rev. David Elliott, D.D.--[EDITOR OF THE BOARD.]

I.

The General Assembly have repeatedly expressed their earnest desire for the universal prevalence of temperance among the people of this land. But as a new exigency has arisen, growing out of the demoralizing tendency of war, this Assembly enjoins upon all their ministers, ruling elders, and church-members, to use their influence upon those around them, particularly on our young men now returning from the army, and on our youth in academies and colleges, to practise entire abstinence from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage, which it is believed is the only sure protection against drunkenness. "Intemperance is a great sin against God, as well as a bitter curse to man —obstructing the progress of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the world, and weakening its power

over the heart of men." Hence it is an imperative duty, required alike by piety and patriotism, to do whatever may be practicable, "to stem the torrent that is sweeping myriads into the vortex of irretrievable ruin." Especially should there be the frequent utterance of friendly warning to the young and inconsiderate, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," accompanied by a corresponding example. This simple and effective remedy, carried into all the walks of life, will make our nation as prosperous and happy in peace as it has been heroic and victorious in war.

II.

The great increase of intemperance throughout the land, especially in our towns and large cities, renders it imperative on the Church to put forth her influence to arrest it in its destructive progress. But, to render her influence effective, she must purge herself from all participation in the sin, by removing from her pale all who are engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks for use as a common beverage.

When a person has been admitted to sealing ordinances in Christ's house, he ought not to be excluded, but upon grounds which are sanctioned by the word of God, and the discipline of the Church; and where such exclusion takes place, it is always founded upon an alleged offence against the authority and laws which Christ has established in his house. Hence, one of the ends of discipline, as laid down in our standards, is "the removal of offences" from the Church of Christ. In the very outset, then, it becomes necessary to ascertain what is an offence. In our Book of Discipline, it is defined to be "anything

in the principles or practice of a church member, which is contrary to the word of God, or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification." (Chap. i. § 3.) That the practice of manufacturing and retailing intoxicating drinks, is, in its own nature sinful, we do not affirm, and need not therefore consider it, in this sense, an offence against the laws of Christ's house. But that it tempts others to sin and mars their spiritual edification, is too obvious to require proof. The retailer is the proximate agent in tempting many to drink to drunkenness, and in forming in others the appetite for strong drink, which leads to brutal intoxication. In doing this, he offends against God's children, who are grieved at his conduct, which is productive of such injurious results, both to the bodies and souls of men. On these grounds, therefore, he is guilty of "an offence" against the word of God, which is very explicit in setting its seal of condemnation on such conduct. In the eighth chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle has decided this point with great precision. In the church of Corinth, some thought it to be right to eat meat which had been offered to idols—others thought it wrong. The matter was submitted to the apostle, who decided, that although the act was not in its own nature sinful, yet if it became the occasion of offence or injury to a weak brother, it ought not to be done. "But meat commendeth us not to God; for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed, lest by any means, this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee, which hast

knowledge, sit at meat in the idol temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak, be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols, and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died. But when ye so sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, *ye sin against Christ.* Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." According to this decision of the apostle, therefore, men "sin against Christ," when they "sin against the brethren," by doing that which, though not sinful in itself, becomes a stumbling-block to them, and tempts them to the commission of sin. Against such a course, the apostle guards professing Christians, and declares that he had determined to avoid it.

Now the apostle's decision in regard to the case at Corinth, applies to the use of intoxicating drinks, when manufactured and sold for a common beverage. When prepared and sold for this purpose, those who do so "sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience," and thus "sin against Christ." Hence, they are guilty of "an offence," their conduct being "contrary to the word of God."

Thus far, the subject appears very plain. That a manufacturer and retailer of intoxicating drinks for the purpose mentioned, is guilty of an offence proved to be such from Scripture, the foregoing remarks clearly demonstrate. But is it such an offence as ought to exclude persons from the full privileges of the Church? In maintaining the affirmative of this question, it is important to remark, that whatever would prevent the admission of a person to the sealing

ordinances of the Church, on his first application, ought, if found in connection with his character or conduct after his admission, to exclude him from her communion. This is so evident as to require no proof. What then would be considered a sufficient bar to the full enjoyment of the privileges of the Church? To this we reply, that anything in the principles or practice of the applicant for admission, which greatly impaired or destroyed the credibility of his profession of faith in Christ, would be a sufficient ground of refusal. For the ground of admission, as presented both in the word of God and the standards of the Church, is a credible profession of faith in the Son of God. In the case of the jailor, of the Ethiopian eunuch, and even of Simon Magus, who afterwards apostatized, a credible profession was required and exhibited, before they were admitted to the communion of the society of the faithful. The same principle is recognized in our standards. "Those who are admitted to sealing ordinances shall be examined as to their knowledge and piety." (Dir. Wor. chap. 1. § 3.) (See also chap. 4. § 4.) From these passages, it is manifest, that such a profession as involves credible evidence of Christian character, in which knowledge and piety are essential elements, is required by our Book, of those who would be admitted to sealing ordinances. Such being the case, whatever essentially impairs or destroys this evidence, bars the way to their admission. Accordingly, it is provided, that "such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ has left in

his Church, until they receive instruction and manifest their reformation." (L. Cat. Q. 173.) Ignorance and immorality of conduct are here indicated as sufficient grounds on which to refuse an applicant admission to the table of the Lord. The reason is, that where either or both exist, there is a want of credible evidence of Christian character, and where this is wanting, the person ought not to be admitted. And on the same ground, a person who has been admitted, if he be afterwards found to be ignorant or scandalous, and thus destitute of the evidence of Christian character, ought to be excluded.

In the case which we are considering, the person in question does not give credible evidence of Christian character. He does not give such satisfaction with respect to his "knowledge and piety," as is sufficient to entitle him to continue in the full privileges of the Church, as a member in good standing. For the man who, at the present time, is ignorant of the effects of the practice of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks as a common beverage, in tempting others to sin, and "marring their spiritual edification," must be criminally regardless of what is going on around him. And he who, knowing this, perseveres in the practice, evinces a state of heart directly the reverse of that which is produced by "the grace of God," that "teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world." On the ground, therefore, that his profession of religion is destitute of the attributes which are necessary to render it credible, he ought not to be continued in the communion of the Church, nor certified as a member in good standing.

We are aware that it has been objected to this view of the case, that it is establishing a new term of communion, not before known in the Church. But, upon the principles laid down and established, it is not. We have seen that credible evidence of Christian character, involving the exhibition of "knowledge and piety," is the old term of communion laid down in God's word, and the standards of our Church. It has also been made to appear, that the practice of manufacturing and retailing intoxicating drinks as a beverage, is a sin against the brethren, and against Christ, and while persevered in, vitiates this evidence, and works a forfeiture of the privilege of Christian communion. If the practice of the Church has been, to any extent, favourable to the admission, or continuance of such persons in her communion, it only proves that the Church, in these cases, has overlooked or neglected to enforce the true principle of her standards. It cannot be fairly drawn into argument to prove, that the principle is not there; or if there, that it ought not to be applied in this, as in other cases of visible offence against Christ and his Church. We conclude, therefore, that it is not adopting any new term of communion to exclude persons from sealing ordinances, on the ground of their manufacturing and vending intoxicating drinks as a beverage. On the contrary, it is only falling back upon the teachings of the Bible and the Constitution of the Church, which require visible Christianity, in a credible form, of those who would partake of these ordinances, and refuses the privilege to those who, by overt acts of offence, fail to present such evidence.

HYMN.

STRAIT is the way, the door is strait,
That leads to joys on high;
'Tis but a few that find the gate,
While crowds mistake and die.

Beloved self must be denied,
The mind and will renewed,
Passion suppressed and patience tried,
And vain desires subdued.

Flesh is a dangerous foe to grace,
Where it prevails and rules;
Flesh must be humbled, pride abased,
Lest they destroy our souls.

The love of gold be banished hence,
That vile idolatry;
And every member, every sense,
In sweet subjection lie.

The tongue, that most unruly power,
Requires a strong restraint;
We must be watchful every hour,
And pray but never faint.

Lord, can a feeble helpless worm
Fulfil a task so hard?
Thy grace must all my work perform,
And give the free reward.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 283.

THERE IS NO PASSING.

"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Luke xvi. 26. Such are the words with which Abraham replied to Dives's request that Lazarus might be sent to put a drop of water on his parched tongue. This is a voice from the spirit-land. The thought often comes to some minds, Oh that one would come from the other world to assure me of these things! This is exactly what Jesus does. He testified to what he saw and knew. He held the keys of hell. He knew there was such a place, for he had seen the lost in their chains and had heard their wailings. He was an eye-witness from the beginning of all we need know of the future state. And he most solemnly declares that there is a hell, and that there is no passing from it unto the realms of bliss.

If therefore this part of Holy Writ teaches anything, it disproves the notion that hell is only a penitentiary where the soul is to suffer for a period sufficient to atone for its guilt, and, after this is completed, to pass to heaven. The words of Christ declare that it is imprisonment for life. Shall man's interested speculations set aside this testimony of Jesus? God has put an eternal

difference between light and darkness, good and evil, truth and error, which no creature's conceit can alter: and therefore no man's judgment is the measure of truth further than it agrees with what God says.

But did our Lord teach this much-hated doctrine. Granting his words their proper meaning, no other conclusion can be reached. Even the enemies of the Bible admit such to be their legitimate sense. "To me it is quite clear that Jesus taught the doctrine of eternal damnation, if the evangelists—the first three I mean—are to be treated as inspired. *I can understand his language in no other way.* As the Unitarians have misinterpreted the New Testament to prove that the Christos of the fourth Gospel had no existence, the Universalists have misinterpreted passages of the Gospel to show that Jesus of Nazareth never taught eternal damnation." (*Theodore Parker.*) "I freely say that I do not find the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all souls clearly stated in any text or in any discourse that has been reported from the lips of Christ." (*T. Starr King.*) Renan says that in the mind of Jesus "Paradise and Gehenna (hell) shall have no end." Now this is the import put on Christ's words by those who care little what the Bible teaches. Indeed, some of them reject the book for the very reason that it teaches eternal punishment. There is no alternative but to reject the Scriptures or admit the eternity of hell. The doctrine of eternal woe to the finally impenitent is adopted by the piety of Christendom. Those who show the deepest love to God,

and are eminent for holiness, believe the words of our Lord, "There is no passing."

Some lull the warnings of conscience, and the admonitions of Scripture to prepare to meet God, by the hope that there will be a probation in the next world, so that those who die in sin may repent in the clearer light of eternity. Now what evidence is there of such a probation? Not a word from Christ, nor apostle, nor prophet. Dives's wail, so intercessory for his brethren, while so hopeless for himself, certainly does not lead to the suspicion that there is any other mode of escaping those torments save by not coming into them. Nor do those other fearfully plain words, in which our Lord declares that one may sin in such a way that it shall not be forgiven him in this world, neither in the world to come. Matt. xii. 32.

Consider how unreasonable such a probation is. For if there ought to be another probation furnished in mercy to those who neglect *this*, then there ought to be still another for those who neglect *that;* and indeed a fourth probation for those who may neglect the third. For we cannot suppose that all those who pass their mortal life unreconciled to God will certainly seek his favor in perdition. What is there in the torments of the pit to make men love God? Ah! if one probation in this life, so full as it is of the gracious manifestations of God, does not suffice to draw your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot see how a score of opportunities shall do this in the next world. If you are not led to repent-

ance and a holy life amid the hallowed scenes of the Sabbath and the worship of the sanctuary, where the providence of God leads you in the tearful path to the grave, and prostrates you on a bed of sickness where serious reflection comes,—if *these* do not win or constrain you to your Redemer, I cannot understand how you shall find and love your Maker in the gloomy cells of hell, where naught but curses are heard, where no voice of prayer ascends to soothe your soul, nor pious friend comes to strengthen the feeblest aspiration for holiness. If here on earth you are led captive by Satan at his will, how can you more easily escape his power when abiding in his presence? Dear reader, will you venture the happiness of your priceless soul upon such a peradventure as that you may have a chance to repent in the next world? Why not accept Christ and be safe? Why not do what you confess you should—forsake sin and serve God?

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him," (John iii. 36,) "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thes. i. 9. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." Heb. xi. 6.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 284.

SETH MEAD:

AND HOW HIS SKEPTICISM FAILED HIM.

BY REV. R. S. GOODMAN.

He was a man of the world, but the world could not shield him from the shaft of death. He loved life, but God saw fit to snap its brittle thread while he was yet in the very flower of his age. He fell, as you, my dear friend, very possibly may fall, before the sun of his life had reached its noon.

Whether he died in the possession of a true faith or not, God only knows. He professed to repent of his sins, and prayed for forgiveness at an honest moment.

But this is the point to which I beg leave most kindly to call your attention. Seth Mead had passed his life in alienation from God. Until a very short time before his death he absolutely refused to admit his danger, and seemed resolved to contest every inch of ground with death itself. The doctrines of the cross he spurned. He argued against them. He had imbibed the principles and maxims of the bitterest of skeptics. He told me while on his sick bed of the crowds of hypocrites that he believed thronged all our churches. He looked upon the Bible as of very doubtful authority, and told me plainly it would do no good for any one to come there to talk with him.

I left him, pained and sad in view of his condition, so evidently was he on the brink of the grave, and yet mocking and fighting against the God whom he must so soon meet in judgment. But the clutch of death's fingers grew too strong for further resistance. He began to feel that he *must* die. Ready or not ready, he must go. The Bible true, or the Bible false, he must sink in the grave. Christians really such, or hypocrites, his coffin must very soon receive him.

Then he awoke to the agonizing thought that the Bible *might* be true, notwithstanding his lifelong neglect of it. What if it should! The judgment-day *might* prove to be a dread reality, notwithstanding he had professed to fear no such thing. The religion of Christ *might* be all true, although he had laughed it to scorn. What if it *should* prove so! For some reason, as he saw death certainly approaching, his courage fled, and an unutterable horror got hold upon him. What Christians had told him *might* not be all fiction, after all. What his reckless associates had said concerning the hypocrisy of Christians might not all be so true as he had professed to believe. At all events, he must die. Death was at the very door. And he quailed at the sight of the king of terrors. Then he thought, My life is gone; does hope remain? My skepticism is gone; can my soul be saved? Scoffing is out of time and place now; can my prayer be heard? The world cannot help me; will Christ help me?

And when I called again (for at the request of friends I did so) he said, with choked utterance and an agonized look:

"I have tried to repent of my sins. I have tried to pray, and to cast myself upon Christ, as you told me; *will that save me?*"

I assured him that Christ had said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

"But," said he, "that seems too great a promise for one like me."

After further conversation of the same kind, and after commending him to God in prayer, I left him. And his soul had fled before I saw him again.

Mark now the important thought! Whatever recklessness man feels during the days of his strength and prosperity, his courage very commonly leaves him as the grave opens before him. His unbelief fails to comfort him. His self-righteousness proves insufficient for him. His hope perishes just when he most needs support. Reckless associates for the greater part leave him, or fail utterly to impart any joy to him while they linger by his side. He finds solace no longer in the hypocrisy of others, and inquires often, in agony of spirit, after his own safe-standing before God. Then and there you may

expect to find him honest, whatever may have been his want of candour before. And then and there you seldom hear him scoffing. He may be sullen, and silent; such is not unfrequently the case. But when in his right mind, you seldom hear him arguing against the simple, saving doctrines of the cross that have cheered so many while in the shadow of death.

The false heart cannot—dare not—meet God. Mockery at his Holy Book usually dies a little before the body dies. The world has seen this so often that it knows about what to expect at that hour. But, alas! it is not always true that, as skepticism dies out of the soul, righteousness begins to live in it.

But we know, O impenitent reader, what you will one day do. Should we see you die, we expect just before that event to hear you acknowledge not only that you incline to think the Bible is the Book of God, and true, but also acknowledge your own spiritual suicide. We expect to hear you lamenting in the bitterness of your soul your former cherished unbelief, your cultivated hardness of heart, and your wilful departures from Christ's simple and comforting religion.

Seth Mead fortified himself to his utmost against the kind but pungent appeals of the Saviour. He refused to listen to the most friendly exhortation. He would not hear of Christ, or of death, or of what lies out beyond death. But his flesh and heart failed him. *Then* he cried out in the anguish of his spirit: "I have tried to repent. I have tried to pray and cast myself upon Christ;—*will that save me?*" And you are no braver or stronger than was he.

Are you, then, likely to meet his experience at last? Shall it be so? Shall those who look upon you when you come to grapple with death, in addition to the sorrow they feel at parting with you, be compelled to say, "We could endure it if we had but the assured hope that he had accepted Christ?"

It is no uncommon thing for men to be fearless in robust life; nor is it uncommon for the same persons to quake in terror as the hand of the destroyer is laid upon them. I know one who unblushingly calls the Saviour an impostor, and mocks at his most solemn warnings.

When I have sometimes ventured to say to him, "Were I to stand by your dying bed, I should expect to hear very different language from that you now use," he has said, with look of scorn for my words, "I am not afraid to look God right in the eye!" But who does not know how quickly such bravado dies out, and how often the voice of those who uttered it chokes to silence when all hope of longer life has left them? Experience tells us but too certainly what to expect in such instances, and no amount of assurance or assumed bravery on their part gives us the least confidence that in the hour of their departure they will not manifest an agonized though rebellious heart.

But, my dear friend, shall it be so with you? There is a way by which you may approach the dark valley, and yet with good reason fear no evil. It is the "new and living way." That Redeemer whom so many now reject, says to you, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." There is no other way. He says, "No man cometh to the Father but by me." And again he says: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. To come to him is to believe on him. It is to place one's self right in his hands, and trust his words. Come, then. Be persuaded. Cast yourself upon him. Say to him,

"Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find—
O Lamb of God, I come."

Then sooner will heaven and earth pass away than will his promise to save you be forgotten or revoked.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1334 Chestnut St., Philada.

EATING AND DRINKING UNWORTHILY.

BY THE REV. GEORGE. S. MOTT.

"*He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*" 1 Cor. xi. 29. Few verses of the holy Scriptures have given more trouble to weak and doubting Christians than has this. It has deterred many from approaching the communion-table. It has been successfully employed by Satan to spoil the spiritual enjoyment which our Lord designed should be derived from the commemoration of his death. The plea is urged, "I am unworthy to partake of this holy ordinance. I shall only expose myself to damnation. I must wait until I become more worthy and better prepared to celebrate it."

For these reasons we propose to inquire *what it is to eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's table.*

I. It is *not to eat and drink with a consciousness of unworthiness.* The language is, "Whosoever eateth and drinketh *unworthily*"—*i. e.*, in an unworthy manner. The reference is to the state of heart with which one approaches the service and to the motives by which the partaker is influenced. So that one may participate in this ordinance in a worthy or proper manner, while he may be overwhelmed with a sense of sinfulness and burdened with the thought of unworthiness.

Indeed, so far from this being a disqualification, it is rather a sign of fitness. For such a sense of ill-desert is one of the conditions of acceptable approach to our Saviour now, as it was in the beginning. The Lord regarded with favour the publican, who did not think himself worthy to look up to heaven, but smote upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But the Pharisee, who was not oppressed with a sense of demerit, received no blessing. He came to the temple full, and hence he could not carry away the gifts of God. It has ever been the empty heart, from which self-esteem, and wise conceits, and self-approbation have been cast out, which has received and held the tokens of God's favour. Such can exclaim, "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God."

However distressing may be our consciousness of personal unworthiness—and it can never be too deep—we may love our Saviour and lament the feebleness of that love, and have such a desire to be accepted by him, and be so impressed with his excellence, as to render us precisely those upon whom the Lord will look with great tenderness. For just to the extent we distrust ourselves will we cling to him. In proportion as we are convinced that none but Jesus can help us will we rely exclusively upon his redemption.

In reading the gospels, you cannot fail to notice that those who received the blessings they sought came with deep humility, confessing their personal unworthiness. There was the centurion who besought that his servant might be healed, and who, in presenting his plea, said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." And I might tell of the Syrophœnician woman who was willing to pick up the stray crumbs; and of the blind beggar Bartimeus; and of Zaccheus, who was amazed that the Lord would abide at his house; and of the woman of Samaria; and of the poor lepers,—all of whom received priceless blessings despite great ill-desert. But, on the other hand, those who went away unblest and murmuring were such as the young man who claimed that he had kept all God's requirements; and the young ruler who assumed to approve of the doctrines of Christ; and the whole school of Pharisees and scribes and doctors of the law.

II. *One does not eat and drink unworthily who partakes with serious doubts whether he is duly prepared to come to the Lord's table.* Such misgivings are common in Christian experience. The true believer is sometimes in darkness about his state spiritually, and is ready to conclude that he has deceived himself. There is a false faith and a delusive hope, and may not his be such? He perceives much perplexity in his case, much deceitfulness in his heart, great confusion of religious views; how shall he know whether it

is his duty to go on receiving the Lord's Supper as usual?

Such apprehensions and reasonings are evidence of two things—a tender conscience and a weak faith.

A tender conscience, because such a believer is keenly alive to his own defects and sins. He is not disposed to extenuate his guilt nor haggle about the number of his transgressions. He does not turn away from himself and quiet his fears by impeaching his fellow-Christians. He finds no pleasure in magnifying their defects, in order that his own may be dwarfed. His mistake is, not that his conscience is too sensitive—for we can never have too clear and deep convictions of sin—but that his faith is weak. For from the midst of his sins he should look to the cross, and remember that He who expired thereon bore our sins in his own body. These stains of guilt which horridly glare are washed away by that blood which cleanseth from all sin. But his faith does not rest satisfied with Christ's sufficiency. Timid believer! you need to understand that Jesus Christ saves unto the uttermost, and with this promise you may challenge every doubt and fear. You have this strong consolation, as you lay hold of the hope set before you, that God is faithful to his word—"the bruised reed he will not break, nor quench the smoking flax;" and that "he will dwell with that man who is of an humble heart and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at his word."

But inquire into the nature and ground of these doubts. You say you are often in darkness about

your state, and are ready to fear that all along you have been deceiving yourself. Now what is the reason of these suspicions? Satan and an unbelieving heart may be the cause of all your fears. You are then to hold the shield of faith before your heart, and thus prevent these fiery darts from piercing your soul. And where can that shield of faith be repaired better than at the Lord's table? You may be oppressed with doubts even as you partake of the emblems, and feel as though you ought to leave the sacred spot, and this may be Satan disturbing your peace. For when the sons of God come to present themselves, he comes also.

Perhaps you say, "I have good reason for my suspicions. I feel much corruption in my heart, much deadness, much vanity and selfishness, while I experience little love to God or faith in his Son." But does not this show that the Lord has enlightened you to know yourself, has given you a view of the plague of your own heart, and does not suffer you to rest contented under the prevalence of any corruption? Certainly this is no evidence that the Lord has abandoned you. However it may call for self-abasement, it does not warrant your doubt that you are a child of God. It proves this, that you are not indifferent to sin nor lulled by a false security. Regard also the tendency of these suspicions. Which way do they work? Do they make you more humble and watchful and more desirous of true grace? Do they cause you to long for holiness? Do they awaken repent-

ance, and lead you to prayer? If your fears produce such results, you have good reason to conclude that your heart is right with God.

In our Larger Catechism the question, whether "one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation may come to the Lord's Supper?" is thus answered: "One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity; in which case (because the promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief and labour to have his doubts resolved; and so doing he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened."

III. But to eat and drink unworthily *is to come in a careless and irreverent manner to the Lord's table.* This was the sin charged upon the Corinthians. They made the meal which preceded the sacrament an occasion for feasting, and even for gluttony and drunkenness. At one time in England receiving the Lord's Supper was associated with induction into offices of responsibility, and thus it became in the eyes of the world a qualifiation for those offices; whereas the original purpose was that it should be a declaration

that one was a sincere member of the Church of Christ. Such an observance necessarily led to a profanation of this sacrament. Men sought their promotion by attending this ordinance, without having those pious emotions which render it a religious act. Infidels have been so full of malignity and bitterness against the Christian religion as to observe a mock celebration of this supper. It is a remarkable fact that not a few such persons have died a miserable death, conscience accusing them and remorse goading their souls with indescribable horrors for their profanation of the holiest rite of Christianity. And it is also a fact that some of those who have engaged in such sacrilegious conduct have become alarmed at their impious deed and obtained no peace of mind until they found it in that blood whose shedding they thus profanely celebrated. Persons have been known to commune at the Lord's table from the same motives which induced them to profess faith in Jesus Christ—that under the guise of piety they might more easily and securely carry on their wickedness. By engaging in this solemn service they restrained suspicion and succeeded in their iniquitous practices.

There are, we have reason to fear, those who sit at the table of that Saviour who forgave them all their debt, and who daily passes by transgressions, and who has borne with their neglects and coldness, but who cannot find it in their hearts to forgive those who trespass against them. Bitterness, malice, hatred, jealousy, ill-will, still rankle in their bosoms against

some Christian brother or sister. They have overlooked that command of our Lord, "Love one another, even as I have loved you." No wonder that these find the sacrament a joyless and unrefreshing service, for their unforgiving temper stands sentry to keep out all gracious emotions.

It is evident that all these classes must eat and drink unworthily, and be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. All who engage in the service with an irreverent heart, as do often the kings of Europe after their coronation, regarding it as the final act of inauguration, or with any other intent than to commemorate the death of our Lord as the sacrifice for our sins, contract guilt in reference to the death of Jesus Christ. Those who partake of this sacrament without repentance and faith, without reverence and holy resolves, without love and reconciliation—in short, without the renunciation of all deliberate and presumptuous sins—offend as against the body and blood of our Lord. They partake unworthily who do not keep in view the holy purport of the solemnity—who do not show forth the death of the Lord.

IV. We may eat and drink *unworthily by not discerning the Lord's body.* "This is my body broken for you," said our Saviour; that is, this broken bread is a symbol of my sacrificed body. "This is my blood shed for you," as he took the cup; that is, the wine is a symbol of my blood, a sacrifice for sins. We are to apprehend this symbolic import, else we fail of par-

taking in a proper and profitable manner. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body.*" Hence our Shorter Catechism states, as a qualification for a worthy receiving, "knowledge to discern the Lord's body and faith to feed upon him."

Now, this is not a mysterious knowledge, nor the faith a subtle act of the mind. For as in a picture of a man hanging on a cross between two other men and wearing a crown of thorns, you would recognize the Lord Jesus Christ dying for sinners, so in the bread and wine you discern—through your faith upon the word of God—that Jesus Christ laid down his life a ransom for your soul. He tells you that in the sacred Scriptures. He assures you of it by the witness of the Holy Spirit in your heart, and then he confirms it through this outward emblem, in which he sets forth, by means of bread and wine, that Jesus Christ died for you; and you in the act of receiving those emblems do receive and rest upon Jesus Christ as your Saviour. "The words 'given for you,' and 'shed for the remission of sins,' are associated with the act of eating and drinking the elements, as expressing the chief thing in this sacrament; and he who truly believes in these words is a right worthy and well-qualified communicant. But he who does not accept their truth is unworthy and disqualified, for all that the words 'for you' require is a sincere, believing heart."*

"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth

* Lange on First Corinthians.

and drinketh *damnation* to himself." This one word needs to be explained. It originally and properly means *condemnation*, and not hopeless and final perdition. The meaning is that the unworthy partaker contracts guilt and exposes himself to the judgments of God. What kind of judgments the apostle had in mind is obvious from his reference to sickness and death, as an indication of the divine displeasure toward those who irreverently or carelessly came to this ordinance.

A true child of God may now come to this same ordinance in a backsliding state. He may engage in a formal manner. His love may not be increased. There may be no reconsecration of himself to that Saviour who bought him with precious blood. He may not realize the extent of his transgressions. Indeed, within a few hours the whole service may pass from his mind. Of course he eats and drinks unworthily. He has contracted guilt before God, just as he would by neglecting prayer. He has grieved his Saviour, just as he does every day by unchristian conduct. And God will deal with him by his Spirit and providence to bring him to his first love. He will gently correct him and afflict him, and mercifully chasten, that he may be convinced, humbled and reclaimed. By unworthily partaking he exposed himself to the divine displeasure, and that displeasure has been manifested by correcting providences. But he did not sin so as to forfeit divine grace or lose his soul.

In view of the possibility of eating and drinking

unworthily, Paul exhorts, "*Let a man examine himself.*" An inspection of his heart and conduct will reveal his sins. He will then repent and seek the forgiveness of his Saviour. He will be convinced of his own weakness. His personal goodness will vanish as the morning cloud. His lukewarmness in his Master's cause will fill him with shame. And his song, as he goes to the sacramental service will be—

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked come to thee for dress;
Vile I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

There is nothing in these words, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself," that should surround the Lord's table with gloom. The careless and Christless are warned, but the timid believer is not to be deterred. We do not come unto the mount covered with clouds and darkness, from which issue the signs of wrath, but unto Mount Zion, the abode of mercy and grace, and "to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

"Come then, ye fearful souls, who start at the mention of this ordinance. Do you not love Jesus? Have you not made choice of him as your Saviour? Would you not love him more and be brought into a greater conformity to him? You are the very persons Christ invites. Would you prostitute this ordi-

nance to any vile earthly purpose? Would you eat and drink in a disorderly and indecent manner? No! You would come to remember the love of a dying Redeemer, and to view all that is here exhibited; you would come to be quickened, to behold a suffering Saviour, to admire the riches of distinguishing grace in the sacrament of the Son of God; but you are afraid you are unworthy to make such an approach to God and be indulged with such a privilege. If it be thus with you, do not be discouraged. Venture near your Redeemer. Come humbly to view your expiring Lord, and to plead and rest upon his atoning sacrifice, and you will be far from eating and drinking unworthily."* "A penitent heart, a simple reliance on God's free mercy by faith in Christ, according to the new covenant in his blood, a thankful recollection of his sufferings and of his love, a desire to show his death, to profess our obligations to him, and to give up ourselves to his service, in doing good to his people and to all men for his sake, constitute the proper preparation for acceptably communicating. All who aim and pray to be enabled to come in this frame of heart and mind are bound in gratitude, and by their professed subjection to Christ, to show the Lord's death till he come."†

* Pike and Hayward, Cases of Conscience. † Scott.

No. 286.

A STORY OF SUBSTITUTION.

HOW THE KING DIED INSTEAD OF THE MURDERER.

It was early dawn in Jerusalem, but the whole city was awake. For days past multitudes had been crowding in to attend the great feast of the Passover—caravans from the desert, rich cavalcades from the cities, troops of peasants from the plains. The Roman governor had arrived from Cæsarea with a glittering escort; and the king of Galilee with his brilliant court had filled the beautiful palace that rose proudly from the midst of the city.

It was to be a day of high solemnity at Jerusalem. From morning till evening the temple would be crowded with worshippers from every part of the world.

There was also to be a crucifixion. Some of the criminals who had been taken in the late insurrection were to be executed; and among them was Barabbas the murderer, one of the most desperate and bloodthirsty characters that ever had troubled the Roman government in Judea. There was great curiosity to see how he would die, and how his desperate spirit would meet the lingering tortures of the cross and the taunts of the Roman soldiers.

There was a report also that Jesus of Nazareth, the great Galilean prophet, had been arrested during the night by the chief priests, on a charge of blasphemy against the holy temple. This had already created much commotion. The Galileans were in consternation. They had seen this man work manifest miracles among them. They were spectators of the holiness of his life, of his goodness to the sick and suffering and of the wonderful power of his words. There were

credible witnesses in the city who had but a short time since seen him raise a man from the dead after he had lain four days in the tomb.

Many had hoped that long ere this he would have raised the standard of liberty, like another Judas Maccabæus, and calling on his countrymen to join him in expelling the Roman tyrants, would have accepted the crown from their hands and have reigned as the people's king. Six days since, multitudes had poured forth from the city gates to welcome his arrival. They had received him with acclamations as the Messiah, the son of David, of whose lineage he claimed to come. They had heard him publicly, in words of awful rebuke, denounce the hypocrisy and concealed wickedness of the powerful religious orders who ruled the minds of the people. This was doubtless the cause of his arrest, if it were true. But if it was true, where were his claims to divine origin and divine power? He had declared himself publicly to be the Son of God as well as the Messiah of Israel. Some of his followers had received him as such, and rendered him divine worship. Could it be possible that with all these claims, and with the miraculous power which he undoubtedly possessed, he had been unable to protect himself against his deadly enemies? Would his pretensions prove after all to be false? Would he be shown to have been a deceiver or self-deceived? Or was he reserving his power for some great display in miraculously and publicly liberating himself from the hands of the chief priests and Pharisees?

Such were the thoughts that were passing through men's minds. All that they had heard was confirmed; and they found the chief priests and rulers waiting in anxious groups round the gate of the judgment-hall; those who stood nearest the entrance gathering up their garments, lest they should be polluted by contact with the pavement of the Gentile tribunal. "They had proved this pretended prophet," said they to the peo-

ple, "to be an impostor. He had been tried before the Sanhedrim, where he had been neither able to defend himself nor to make use of his assumed miraculous power. And now he had been brought to the governor for sentence, that he might die a felon's death for deceiving the people."

The bigoted and cruel Sanhedrim condemned him without pity. The time-serving Roman governor had not the moral courage to protect him. But though base and interested motives may govern those in power, surely popular opinion is free, and the people's vote will triumphantly repeal the rulers' sentence. Let the nation speak, and let humanity be vindicated!

There are other prisoners, indeed under sentence of death, and the people may exercise this right of deliverance in favour of whomsoever they desire. Barabbas, the murderer, is among the condemned—a man of whose life and character we read but a very short account, but all we read of him is bad. Guilty of robbery and murder, he had been taken, red-handed, in a late insurrection in the city, and now lay bound, awaiting the doom to which the laws had condemned him—a painful and ignominious death, even the death of the cross.

Dark, indeed, must his thoughts be, whether they rest on the past or the future. Remorse and horror he may feel as the many crimes of his life crowd upon his memory; but what can sorrow avail him now? The law has been broken; sentence has been passed; execution alone remains. Nor can this be long deferred. The feast is close at hand, and the public execution of malefactors must take place before the coming Sabbath. Each moment may bring to his ears the sound of the executioner's footsteps as he comes to drag him to his doom.

His situation is indeed a miserable one. He may have slept in the condemned cell, and may have dreamed that he was innocent, or that he was free, or that he had found some plan of escape, or some strong

plea to set forth in bar of judgment. But his waking eyes rest on the walls of his prison, and the clank of his chain brings reality to his remembrance.

He knew that many thousands would throng the streets of the holy city and the courts of the temple at the great feast of the approaching Sabbath, but he knew also that before the dawn of that Sabbath morning his mangled body would be laid in a felon's grave.

But Barabbas might remember, in the midst of his despair, that it was the custom of the Roman governor at this feast to release a prisoner to the people. Perhaps the shout of the multitudes without, falling on his ear, raises in his breast a faint hope of such a possible deliverance. But if, dragging himself to the barred window of his dungeon, he can look forth, what a scene will meet his eye.

The great crowd is surging up toward the glittering line of spears that marks the Roman guard before the tribunal. The governor is leading forth the prisoner wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Jesus of Nazareth stands before the people to receive life or death at their hands. Perhaps there were among them many to whom his hands had given health and life. Can they hesitate one moment now to rescue him from death? Will not one universal cry for his release shake the very walls of the city.

Surely Barabbas thinks so, and turns back in bitterness and despair to his cell, when he perceives that the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the good and kind, must be sacrificed before the people can be free to exert their prerogative in his favour, for the law will not permit *both* to go free. Nay, could the people even be so blind to justice and gratitude as to be doubtful in their decision, he knows that there is a God in heaven, who cannot permit such fearful wrong. He cannot suffer the innocent and the good to go forth to a death of lingering agony, that the blood-stained and guilty may go free.

Then let Barabbas turn his face to the wall, and

wait for his doom. No more fair sunshine for him. The cutting scourge, the cruel buffet from the fierce legionary, as he staggers down the crowded street under the burden of the cursed cross. No word of sympathy, no look of pity. The last instinctive struggle for life overpowered amidst brutal jesting, while the clenched hands are strained open and the piercing iron rends the quivering flesh. The strained and tortured body, the burning thirst, the gazing crowds, the glare of the noonday sun, the deadly weariness of the lingering night, and, most terrible of all, the fearful looking for of judgment to come—the awful, everlasting future.

Dark and gloomy as his dungeon looks, he seems to cling to its shelter now, but even this sad respite is denied him. The approach of footsteps falls on his ear. The heavy bars of his prison door roll back; the door grates on its hinges and his jailer enters. But where are his attendants? Where the guards to drag him forth to execution? The man is alone, and his look and his words amaze the prisoner.

"*You are free!*" he cries, and he loosens the fetters from his limbs. Barabbas hears them clank heavily at his feet; yet he can scarce believe his senses. Can he in very deed be free? "And where is Jesus of Nazareth?"

"He has gone to the cross. The people demanded your release; *his death has given you life.*"

Is not this a strange and wonderful occurrence? God, who cannot lie, has written it in his Book. The innocent, the righteous, the holy went forth to cruel torture and death. The guilty, miserable murderer went forth to light, and life, and liberty.

The deliverance of Barabbas fitly represents the salvation of every redeemed sinner. He could not take one step toward freedom; he could not raise a finger to help himself. But liberty was proclaimed to him in his cell, and he walked forth free.

Do you, dear reader, know yourself a sinner in the

full sense of the word, both guilty and helpless? "*Then be it known to you that by this man* (the Lord Jesus Christ) *is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things.*" You may go forth on accepting this message, as free as Barabbas. Have you seen your guilt and your condemnation? If you have, then "*to you is the word of this salvation sent.*" It was to Barabbas, the guilty and condemned, that the death of Jesus of Nazareth brought life; not to the religious Pharisee, not to the haughty Roman, not to the ordinance-observing Jew. It is of the utmost importance that you should perceive how God's message of salvation contemplates only helplessness and guilt in you. He has not told you to do your best, and trust him then for supplying your deficiency and pardoning your shortcomings. On the contrary, he has set before you your own utter ruin, and commanded you to accept, as individually addressed to you, this proclamation of full, free salvation, resulting from the substitution of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not satisfied to rest on this as alone sufficient to present you faultless before the throne of God, you are still in rebellion against him. *You are clinging to your chain!* You have not submitted yourself to the righteousness of God. Do you know what this expression means?

It means that as man's intellect surpasses the mere instinct of the beast, so does God's requirement and standard of righteousness differ from the natural man's highest attribute of integrity or amiability. A man may admire the sagacity of his dog, but he cannot admit him to his table or his council, for he is but a dog at best, and he will die like a dog. So between God's holiness and man's virtue there is a difference, not in *degree*, but in *kind*. Human excellence cannot raise man to heaven or give him eternal life. It dies in the disease of his moral corruption, if he is not healed by divine power.

But he who has submitted himself to the righteous-

ness of God knows well the truth of this. He knows that his own "righteousness is but as filthy rags." He gets to the edge, as it were, of his own merit. He sees the fearful gulf that separates him from the happy region of God's favour, and, shuddering, he falls in the dust on the brink of that mighty precipice. But lo! he hears how that *the great Jehovah has risen from his throne, and descended into the measureless depths of that yawning chasm, and that, deep in the abyss, he has laid a sure foundation, cemented with blood, and on it reared a mighty arch that spans the distance from the convicted sinner to his own throne; and now, with trembling step, on that firm highway, he passes safely into life and liberty!*

Have you thus seen that the best thing which you bring to God as a plea for pardon is an abomination in his sight? Have you seen that unless God stoops from his throne to lift you from the dust, you have no wings whereon to raise yourself one hair's breadth toward him; that if he interpose not his power to save you, the gravitation of your sinful nature must sink you in hell for ever? Then, having seen all this, what can you find to bar you now from passing into the assured joy of eternal salvation? Nothing certainly on God's side.

When Barabbas heard that Jesus of Nazareth had gone to death instead of him, he might walk boldly down to Calvary. He might stand beneath the cross, and as he saw the righteous hands and feet stretched forth and pierced and bleeding, he might recognize the full assurance of his own safety in the sufferings of his Substitute. He might look the rulers and the soldiers boldly in the face, and they could not lay a finger on him, for they knew that the governor had "released him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, but had delivered Jesus to their will."

So may you, knowing your guilt and condemnation, stand by faith beneath the cross of the Lord Jesus and see him crushed and broken, yet obedient unto death,

under the wrath of God. And if, obeying God's command, you are looking to this atonement as absolutely necessary for your salvation, and resting upon it as alone all-sufficient for your complete justification, then indeed you may rest assured that he died in your place, "*the just for the unjust.*" You are free, not because God has remitted the punishment of your sin—that he could not do, for he tells you that he can "*in nowise clear the guilty*"—but you are free because your guilty life has been accounted for to its last breath. You are free because God charged Christ, his holy Son, with your sin, and condemned him, and gave him to death, a willing Substitute in your place.

God himself, therefore, is your justifying Judge. Satan, the great accuser, may bring the black book of your crimes before the throne. He may show death recorded there against every item. Death, everlasting death, sums up the whole. The Judge does not extenuate one single charge, but over against the last great total he writes in blood, "*Christ died;*" and the account is balanced for ever. The simple, definite statement of this fact should meet all your fears. Scripture teaches that *that death* was something more than a manifestation of God's justice in condemning sin—more even than a compensation rendered to God for his insulted majesty. It was the result of an interchange of position between the Lord Jesus Christ and his people, whereby his merits passed to them—their sins to him. "*He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" The responsibility which he assumed as attaching to us was a debt of eternal punishment; and when he cried, "*It is finished,*" it was the announcement that *that debt* had been paid in full equivalent; we can therefore, now rejoice that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

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No. 287.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

Remember, dear reader, that Jesus Christ thy Saviour has said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matt. v. 17.

Now the Lord thy God commands thus in his law: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Ex. xx. 8–11.

And in the Prophets, God commands not only Israel, but also thee: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

But because Sunday, the Christian Sabbath or the "Lord's day," should especially be a day for the service of God to hear the word of God, therefore does the Lord speak through Moses: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." Lev. xxiii. 3. And through the Apostle "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. x. 25. And of our Lord and Saviour it is reported: "And when the Sabbath day was come he began to teach in the synagogue." Mark vi. 2. "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days." Luke iv. 31. And of the Apostle Paul, that "the Gentiles besought that these words [of God] might be preached to them the next Sabbath. And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Acts xiii. 42–44.

Finally, it is promised in direct reference to all this: "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." Isa. lvi. 2.

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LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF REV. T. MONOD.

ONLY three words; but these three words contain the whole secret of life.

"Looking unto Jesus"—*in the Scriptures*, to learn who he is, what he has done, what he gives, what he requires; to find in his character our pattern, in his teaching our instruction, in his precepts our laws, in his promises our stay, in his person and in his work a full satisfaction afforded to every want of our souls.

"Looking unto Jesus"—*crucified*, to find in his blood poured out our ransom, our pardon, our peace.

"Looking unto Jesus"—*risen again*, to find in him that righteousness which alone can justify us, and through which, unworthy though we are, we may draw near, with full assurance in his name, unto Him who is his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

"Looking unto Jesus"—*glorified*, to find in him our advocate with the Father, making complete, through his intercession, the merciful work of our salvation; appearing even now in the presence of God for us, and supplying the imperfection of our prayers by the power of those which the Father heareth always.

"Looking unto Jesus"—*as revealed to us by the Holy Ghost*, to find, in constant communion with him, the cleansing of sin-stained hearts, the illumination of our darkened minds, the transformation of our perverse will, to the end that we may triumph over the world and the devil—resisting their violence through Jesus our strength, bringing their devices to naught

through Jesus our wisdom; upheld by the sympathy of Jesus, who was himself tempted in all things, and by the help of Jesus, who resisted and conquered.

"Looking unto Jesus"—that we may receive from him the work and the cross of each day, with the grace which is sufficient to bear the cross and to do the work; patient through his patience; active by his activity; loving with his love; asking not, "What can I do?" but, "What can he not do?" relying upon his strength, which is made perfect in his weakness.

"Looking unto Jesus"—that the brightness of his face may enlighten our darkness; that our joy may be holy and our grief subdued; that he may humble us, to exalt us in due time; that he may afflict and then comfort us; that he may strip us of our self-righteousness to enrich us with his own; that he may teach us how to pray, and answer our prayers; so that while we are in the world we may not be of the world, our life being hid with him in God, and our works bearing him witness before men.

"Looking unto Jesus"—who has reascended to his Father's house to prepare a place for us, that this blessed hope may give us courage to live without murmuring, and to die without regret when the day shall come to meet the last enemy whom he has conquered for us—whom we shall conquer through him; once the king of terrors, now the messenger of everlasting peace.

"Looking unto Jesus"—who gives repentance as well as remission of sins, to receive from him a heart that feels its wants and cries for mercy at his feet.

"Looking unto Jesus"—that he may teach us to look unto him who is the author and object of our faith; that he may keep us in that faith, of which he is also the finisher.

"Looking unto Jesus"—and to no other, as our text expresses it in one word which is untranslatable, and which enjoins us at one and the same

time to fix our eyes upon him and to turn away from all besides.

"Unto Jesus"—and not unto ourselves, to our thoughts, our wishes, our plans; unto Jesus, and not unto the world, its allurements, its examples, its maxims, its opinions; unto Jesus, and not unto Satan, whether he tries to affright us with his rage or seduce us by his flatteries. Oh, how many useless questions, uneasy scruples, dangerous compromises with evil, distracted thoughts, vain dreams, bitter disappointments, painful struggles, sad backslidings could we not avoid by looking always unto Jesus, and following him wherever he leads the way, lest we should lose sight of that in which he leads us!

"Unto Jesus"—and not unto our meditations and prayers, to our religious conversations and edifying books; not to the assemblies of the faithful which we frequent, nor even to the participation of the Supper of our Lord. Let us make a faithful use of all these means of grace, but let us not confound them with grace itself, or turn away our eyes from Him who alone can make them effectual, by giving himself to us through their means.

"Unto Jesus"—and not to our standing in the Christian Church, to the name we bear, to the doctrine we profess, to the opinion that others have of our piety, or to that which we ourselves entertain. Many who have prophesied in the name of Christ shall one day hear him say, "I never knew you;" but he will confess before his Father and his angels even the humblest of those who have looked unto him.

"Unto Jesus"—and not to our brethren; not even to the best and most beloved among them. If we follow a man, we run the risk of losing our way; but if we follow Jesus, we are certain that we shall never go astray. Besides, by putting a man between Christ and us, it happens that the man imperceptibly grows in our eyes, while Christ becomes less; and

soon we know not how to find Christ without finding the man; and if the latter fails us, all is lost. But if, on the contrary, Jesus stands between us and our dearest friend, our attachment to our friend will be less direct and at the same time more sweet; less passionate, but purer; less necessary, but more useful —the instrument of rich blessings in the hands of God while it shall please him to use it, and whose absence will still be a blessing when it shall please him to dispense with it.

"Unto Jesus"—and not to the obstacles we meet in our path. From the moment that we stop to consider them, they astonish and unnerve us and cast us down; incapable as we are of comprehending either the reason why they are permitted or the means by which we may overcome them. The apostle began to sink as soon as he turned to look at the boisterous billows, but so long as he continued looking unto Jesus he walked upon the waves as upon a rock. The harder our task and the heavier our cross, the more it behooves us to look to Jesus only.

Reader, *everywhere, always* LOOK TO JESUS.

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EXCUSES,

OR

A FEW PLAIN WORDS WITH A FRIEND.

By the Rev. WILLIAM J. McCORD, Wassaic, N. Y.

My Friend.—A few plain words, if you please. By the word of God you are charged with sin in breaking his law, with unbelief in rejecting his Son, and your plea of not guilty is unavailing. By the same word of God the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is set forth, and your objections to this way can be of no force when opposed by a plain Thus saith the Lord. He is true, and his word must silence every objection. By this same word of God your duty is also clearly made known. It is immediate repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. What have you to say for the neglect of duty? What for persisting in sin and unbelief? What excuses have you to make? Come and let us reason together.

Do you say *you have so many worldly matters on hand that you have no time?* Worldly matters! Who authorized you to attend to them to the neglect of

your soul? Do you know who has said, Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Have you no regard for his command? Worldly matters! "And what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark viii. 36, 37. No time! Who gave you six days of the week to attend to your necessary worldly avocations? And who demands of you one day in seven for his service? No time! How many Sabbaths have you had? how many precious seasons for attending to the affairs of the soul? No time! You will one day have time to die; and it will be hard dying with no Saviour present to support you and to receive your naked spirit—hard dying when you must leave all your treasures behind you, and have no refuge from wrath eternal! Time, friend, time! Take the present moment and flee to Christ! Now!

Do you say *you must wait God's time?* Wait! God's time is the present. "Now is the accepted time!" "Now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart." 2 Cor. vi. 2: Heb. iii. 15. Waiting God's time! How many years has he been waiting for you? He waits to be gracious, friend, he waits! But how much longer he will wait none can know. Now he waits; he bends his ear to hear you cry! Angels wait to bear to heaven the tidings of your repentance! How much longer will *you* wait?

Till a convenient season? So did Felix, and perished waiting! Wait till a convenient season to love God? You should love him now! Wait till a convenient season to believe in Christ? You should believe now! Wait till a convenient season to repent, attend to the concerns of the soul and secure a title to heaven? Why everything else should give way to this, and you should not sleep until you obtain a comfortable assurance that your dying sleep shall be on the bosom of the Son of God!

Do you say *you have no disposition to seek the Lord?* Fearful indeed! At enmity with God, and no mind to become reconciled! Perishing in sin, yet no wish to escape eternal death! Oh, friend, angels might weep over you! Yea, the Saviour himself might weep, as he did over Jerusalem! But you have no tears to shed for yourself, no heart to sorrow for sin, no inclination to turn unto God!

Do you say *you are dependent upon the Spirit?* Ah, if you but felt your helplessness there would be some hope. Dependent upon the Spirit! Then why do you resist the Spirit? Dependent upon the Spirit! Then why refuse to seek the Spirit? Dependent upon the Spirit! Then why not pray God to give you his Spirit? Have you ever prayed for the Spirit? Ever asked? Has not the Spirit often touched your heart? Is it not even now tender? Does not the tear stand in your eye? Ah, the Spirit is near. He is hover-

ing over you. He is putting his finger upon your heart, and it beats with a quicker pulse. You tremble now! Oh beware! Beware lest you grieve the Spirit away! Ask him to stay! Begin to pray, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me." Ps. li. 1–11. If you feel your dependence upon the Spirit, then ask for the Spirit, and yield to the Spirit. Pray! Repent!

Do you say *you cannot repent?* But is not the Spirit promised? Is he not near? Then you are without excuse. God says, Repent; and you must repent or perish! You may say you can't repent; still, God says, Repent! You say you can't. God still says, Repent, or perish! Still you say you can't! Then perdition is before you! Do you feel you cannot—that your case is helpless and hopeless? That is right. You should so feel; and then you are prepared to look to Jesus Christ, who is "exalted to give repentance," and to the Spirit who is promised to work in sinners every Christian grace. Look to Jesus Christ, look to the Spirit of all grace, and there is help and hope and salvation. Acts v. 31; John xvi. 7–11; Luke xi. 1–13.

Do you say *you have not conviction enough?* But no particular amount of conviction is needed. You feel yourself a sinner; then come to Christ for salvation. He will receive you and give you rest. Matt. xi. 28–30.

Do you say *you intend to become pious before you die?* Beware! Listen not to this device of Satan! Are you sure you shall live to have another opportunity? And if you live, are you sure you may be favoured with the influences of the divine Spirit, without which you feel yourself and are so helpless and hopeless? There is danger in delay. Defer not the great work of preparation for death. Prepare to meet thy God. Amos iv. 12.

Remember, my friend, God has claims upon you which should overrule all your objections and excuses. He demands your heart, and he has a right to your heart. He demands your love, and he has a right to your love. When he offers you his Son, he has a right to expect that you will receive and reverence and love his Son, and you refuse to do so at your peril. Had he done nothing for you but given you existence, he would have a right to your love and service; and how much more now that he has done so much! It is not the fear of death, nor the fear of hell, that should lead you to repentance. The claims which God has upon you should constrain you at once to return to him and devote yourself to his service; and how are these claims strengthened by the cross of Christ! See there the love of God for you! See there the love of Jesus! And can you have any excuse for your impenitence and unbelief?

None! Your excuses are worthless! The right-

eous claims of God, the invincible arguments of the cross of Christ, vanquish them all. Power has been displayed in your creation, goodness in your preservation, love in your redemption; and can you sever all the ties which bind you to the throne of God, and disregard all the obligations which combine to draw you to the cross?

Rather do you say?—"I am convinced of the folly of my way. I have made my pleas; I have raised my objections; I have framed my excuses; but my mouth is stopped. I am guilty before God. My sins lie as an intolerable burden upon my heart. I am ready to sink under the wrath of God. What must I do to be saved?" Ah, friend, there are many things you must not do. You must not cherish your sins; you must not rush into the business and amusements of the world; you must not restrain prayer; you must not resist the Spirit; you must not reject the Saviour; you must not rely upon your prayers and tears or works for acceptance with God; in a word, you must not do anything which will keep you from the Saviour of sinners, away from the cross of Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Trust in him, and in him alone. He has died, and he lives. There is the door of mercy, friend; there is the door of hope—Jesus Christ and him crucified! I direct you to him. There is salvation in no other. There is salvation in him—salva-

tion full and free. Believing in him, you shall have peace with God. Rom. v. 1.

"But *your sins are great, many in number, aggravated in degree?*" Yes, indeed! They are in number as the sands of the sea—"infinite upon infinite, infinite upon infinite"—and in aggravation they are heaven provoking! They are too many and too great for any but a divine Redeemer to bear away. Such a Redeemer we have. He is mighty to save. He came into the world to save sinners. He can save you. Trust him, and he will.

"But *you have not feeling enough, nor conviction enough?*" As no particular amount of conviction, so also no particular amount of feeling is necessary. You are convinced of sin; that is conviction enough. You feel yourself a sinner; that is feeling enough. Come to Christ, then; come now, come just as you are.

"If you tarry, till you are better,
You will never come at all!"

"But *you know not how to go to the Saviour?*" Go repenting; go trusting; go just as you are; wait not; expect not to be better; go with all your sins that he may take them away. Go to him that he may make you better. Feeling your weakness, go to him for strength; feeling your sinfulness, go to him for forgiveness. Tell him all your case. Open your heart fully to him. If you can say no more, tell him you

are a sinner and would be forgiven. Cling to him with a dying grasp, and say, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. Go to Jesus and say,

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour and my all.

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do!"

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No. 290.

CALLS OF GOD,

OR

INVITATIONS AND WARNINGS.

By the Rev. WILLIAM J. McCORD, Wassaic, N. Y.

Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter; because when I called ye did not answer; when I spake ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.—Isa. lxv. 12.

There *are* invitations and warnings. God speaks and calls. To speak and call it is not necessary to use an audible voice or articulate sounds. God has thus spoken to men, but it is not his usual mode, at least in these days. Such things are not now to be expected. God may employ many instruments or agents in speaking to men; and whatever the instrument, we should regard it as the voice of God—a message from him.

God speaks in his written word. He inspired chosen men to make known his will. These spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. God spake through them. Thus we are made acquainted with the way of salvation, and are taught what we must do to be saved. The Lord himself is our teacher. He speaks to us of our sin and misery, of the redemption purchased by Christ; he calls us to forsake our sins, return to him and live.

God speaks by his providences. He puts a tongue in every passing event, which calls on us to love and serve him. Does he give prosperity? His goodness calls us to repentance. Does he visit with affliction? His judgments should teach us righteousness. Do our goods increase? We are admonished to write on them, Holiness to the Lord. Is our property taken from us? We are taught to lay up treasure in heaven. Is a friend taken away? The voice says, Be ye also ready. Is sickness sent? It says, Arise, depart, for this is not your rest. Every pain we feel is an admonition that we cannot live always, and says, Prepare to meet thy God!

God speaks by our pious friends. He prompts them to warn us to flee from the wrath to come. They feel for us; they pray for us; they speak to us, and beseech us not to forget our own souls. The one thing needful is thus urged upon us, and we are called upon to labour for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life.

God speaks in the tract and book. You have had many warnings in this way. The printed sermon has taught you the way of life. The tract has told you of your sins and pointed you to Jesus Christ. And the book, how often has it sounded the alarm in your ears! Has not Pike presented his powerful Persuasives to Early Piety? Has not Baxter called you, and Alleine alarmed you, and Alexander instructed

you, and Kilpin and Payson and Taylor and McCheyne and the Faithful Mother's Reward set before you examples calling loudly to "imitate and live?" You have not read so many pages unmoved. God spake to you in them. He called you to Jesus—called you to prepare for heaven.

God speaks in the monitions of conscience. He prompts this bosom-companion to check us for our sins, to remind us of our eternal destiny, to show us our need of Christ and our duty to believe in him.

God speaks in the preached gospel. This is an appointed means of speaking to men; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Cor. v. 18–21. How often has God thus spoken to you and besought you! How often has he warned you and called you! Every gospel-sermon is a call from God—a call which should be listened to with the most prayerful attention—a call which cannot be innocently disregarded. The messenger may be contemptible, but it is with his message you have to do, and that is not a vain thing, for it is your life—a savour of life, or a savour of death!

God speaks by his Spirit. He thus speaks in the revelation he has given us, for it was the Spirit who indited the word. His Spirit also accompanies the truth to our hearts. He applies the truth and sets it home. He convinces of sin, shows us our need of

the Saviour, and strives with us to draw us to the cross. In a still small voice God thus speaks and calls. He has often thus spoken and called you! When reading your Bible or some religious book or tract, you have felt yourself to be exceeding sinful; it was the Spirit! When you stood by the sick bed of your friend, or saw his remains put into the silent grave, you have feared lest you should soon be called away, and felt yourself unprepared; it was the Spirit! When you heard that sermon or the other, a trembling came over you and you could not sit still; it was the Spirit! In the night, on your bed, you could not sleep; it was the Spirit! God has spoken to you—spoken often by his Spirit; and yet he says, "When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear."

God calls in health. He speaks to us when we are well, for he knows we need to be in the full possession of all our powers to attend aright to the great concern. In health we read his calls on the printed page, we hear them from the pulpit and in the place of prayer, we trace them in the events of providence, we feel them in our hearts.

In sickness God calls. He awakens in us apprehensions of danger; he turns our thoughts to the past; he carries our imaginations to the future; he lets us look into the grave, discloses the solemnities of the judgment, and gives an earnest of eternal retributions.

God speaks in prosperity, when all is bright and cheering, reminds us that our sun may soon be obscured and "storms of sorrow fall."

He speaks in adversity, when all is dark and gloomy, directs our thoughts to a better world, where sorrow and sighing flee away and tears are wiped from all eyes.

God calls in youth, when the heart is tender, before the world has bound it in its iron fetters, and before evil habits have become fixed. He says, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Eccles. xii. 1.

In manhood God calls, impresses us with the importance of being ready for early death, urging the duty of spending the remainder of our days in his service.

In old age he calls, reminds us that our sands are nearly run, that soon the silver cord will be severed and the golden bowl broken, probation ended and the destiny fixed.

In seasons of revival he calls; when others are converted and enter the ark of safety, he leads us to think that now is the accepted time and the day of salvation; he reminds us that one call will be the last, that there will be a last time, that we may refuse Christ and grieve the Spirit once too often; he excites the fear that now may be our last opportunity, that if we now neglect to secure an interest in Jesus Christ we may never have another offer of mercy!

And yet you do not hear! You have been called in every period of your life, in every variety of form, and yet you have not been obedient to the voice of God! You have been called in health and in sickness, in prosperity and adversity, in youth and more advanced age, in times of revival and at this time; and where are you to-day? God says, "When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not."

See the goodness of God and his severity!—goodness in providing salvation, warning men of their danger, calling them to return unto him, when he might have left them without hope, no Saviour provided, no offer of life made, no warnings, no calls, no merciful invitations, no promises to encourage and cheer. But he has done all this and more. May his goodness lead us to repentance! And see his severity in annexing a righteous penalty to his law, threatening those who will not hear his voice, punishing with everlasting destruction those who will not repent and believe! May his severity cause us to prepare to meet him in peace!

The common calls of God are disregarded; the common influences of the Spirit are resisted. These are sufficient to render men inexcusable and to aggravate incalculably their condemnation—yea, they are inexcusable without any calls, without any influences

of the Spirit! But were there no special calls and no special influences of the Spirit all would perish in their sins, and perish justly too! That any may be saved special grace is necessary—necessary to change their hearts, to bow their stubborn wills and to draw them to the cross of Christ. And when all are invited, and all refuse to come, who has a right to complain if God has mercy on whom he will, and leaves whom he will to their chosen way? Not one; no, not one!

The lost can blame only themselves. This is the beauty of the gospel: it gives God all the glory for the salvation of the redeemed, and it charges the guilt and ruin of the lost wholly on themselves. They are what they choose to be; they do as they choose. They cannot charge their condition upon anything out of themselves so long as they answer not when God calls, nor hear when he speaks, but do evil before his eyes and choose that wherein he has no delight. They are responsible for their own doings, accountable for refusing to hear the calls of God, guilty for remaining impenitent and cherishing hearts of unbelief; and if they perish in their sins, they must feel that they, and they only, are to blame. It is so with the lost; they can blame only themselves! It must be so with you, reader, it must be so with you! God has called, and you have refused! He would, and you would not! Pause! Think! Pon-

der what God has spoken. Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter; why? Because when I called ye did not answer; when I spake ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not! Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices. Their sin and blame and ruin rest on themselves. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. Prov. i. 24–33. Reader, God calls you! Hearken to the voice of God, that you may be safe and fear no evil! Come to Jesus Christ and receive him as your Saviour!

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THE EARLY REGENERATION OF SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN.

By THOMAS H. SKINNER., Jr., D.D.

One of the most important institutions which have arisen within the Church during the present century is the Sabbath-school. Its original design was to reach the children of those who neglected the divine ordinances of worship, and who were thus kept aloof from the means of grace. While the sphere of its operation has been somewhat enlarged, and the children of the Church are now generally included in its instructions, its first and chief aim is still preserved, and its work has widened till several millions of the children and youth of the land are embraced in its beneficent enclosures.

The remark is often made: "The Sabbath-school is still in its infancy." Its machinery and methods, the style and spirit of its management and development are imperfect and crude. It by no means accomplishes the good of which it is capable and for which it is intended. Indeed, not a few evils grow out of it which should be corrected and avoided. Many of the best minds of the Church are earnestly pondering these things, and we note not a little advance in many schools.

In the following pages we propose to suggest some

thoughts touching the fundamental principles of this wide-spread institution. We shall not discuss its constitution, or government or relations to the Church, or modes of teaching, or external appliances by which the interest and attention of children are secured. We shall seek to reach the root of the matter, and attempt to point out some of the conditions of a larger success in the high end which we all so much desiderate.

The title of this tract embodies the substance of what we wish to say, and we ask an earnest and candid attention to its unfolding. The views we offer are based upon the faith of the Church as expressed in its symbols; and we firmly believe that their intelligent application to the Sabbath-school work will greatly increase its usefulness and result in the cure of many of the evils so generally deplored.

The first thing on which we remark is suggested by the language in which the theme is announced. It is not the "conversion" of little children that is brought before us, but their "regeneration;" and the difference between the two should be carefully discriminated. Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, creating anew its subjects in Christ Jesus. It is the planting of "the seed of God" in the soul—the imparting of a divine spiritual life to one who is "dead in trespasses and sins." It is the resurrection of such a one, "by the exceeding greatness of God's power," from the grave of the apostasy, from the deep and dark depravity in which the whole race is buried. It is the formation of that vital and indissoluble union between the sinner and the Lord Jesus Christ, in which, as the branch and

the vine are one, as the body and the head are one, as the husband and the wife are one, so, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the renewed sinner and Christ become one. It is a transcendent work of divine power, which any and all human analogies fail fully to set forth in its supernatural reality, and which is resembled by the Lord himself to that mysterious and ineffable union which subsists between the eternal Father and his only begotten Son: "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

Conversion is the result and evidence of regeneration. It is the action of the person's own mind and will in consequence of this prior and fundamental work of the Spirit. It is the sinner himself turning from sin and the world to holiness and God, manifested by a variety of acts and exercises. And there is all the difference between this and regeneration that there is between the work of the infinite God and the resulting work of a finite man.

There is, moreover, a popular use of the word *conversion* which is by no means applicable to regeneration. A person may be "converted" many times. Whenever sin has been committed by a Christian, and he is convinced of it, he is converted from it. So it was with Peter: "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." But we do not often hear, either in ordinary conversation or in the pulpit, of repeated "second births;" repeated "new creations" in regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Thus the distinction between the two terms is easily made. There is a divinity, a glory, about the one we do not immediately associate with the other. A man may be de-

ceived as to the character of his own acts and feelings in conversion; "for the heart is deceitful above all things." But God knows his own work. And when he has wrought the great effect, when he has regenerated the sinner, there can be no mistake about it. The gracious result is produced and remains, no matter what the sinner's thoughts and feelings may be respecting it. There are doubtless many who are *converted* as the language is popularly understood, who, in the exercise of their own wills, resolve to be and to do good, are sorry for their sins, and feel that they believe and repent, and who run well for a time, but who were never really "born again," "begotten" of God the Holy Ghost. But when God has once begun his good work of omnipotent grace in the soul, he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Hence the meaning and importance of the word *regeneration* in our subject.

Accordingly, this is the first, the chief thing, that those who are engaged in the work of Sabbath-schools should aim at, pray and labour for the actual regeneration, by the third Person of the Godhead, of the children brought under the care of the Church. It is not so much to secure the right action of the child, important as this may be, as to secure the almighty, efficacious action of the blessed Spirit, by which the right action of the child will be infallibly assured.

On the very face of it, this is an unspeakably solemn business. It brings the teacher into nearer, closer contact with the eternal Spirit than with the child. In dealing with the child the teacher simply presents truth, motives and appeals; and we know

that this is to no good purpose unless the Holy Spirit is present, and by the secret omnipotent insinuations of his grace seals and makes them vital in the soul of the child. The most serious and tremendous truth we can speak is powerless for salvation apart from this divine co-operation. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God alone gives the increase. There is thus absolute need of some extrinsic power to make truth forcible, efficacious, renewing; and there is no power available to this end other than that of God's eternal Spirit. Accordingly, he who presents that truth must have power with God as well as power with his fellow-man to whom he presents it.

The sentiment is more or less prevalent that there is a difference between the spiritual condition of unrenewed little children and that of unrenewed adults. Doubtless the former are more accessible, more easily moved by statements of Bible truths, than are the latter. Their constitutional susceptibilities are more keen; their intellectual acquaintance with error and evil comparatively slight; their habits of sin less fixed and persistent; but these things do not touch the undeniable and awful fact of their native hereditary depravity; which, while it may not be as active, is none the less existent and total than in the most hardened sinner. Little children have the same indispensable need of the "exceeding greatness of God's power" for renewal and salvation as adults. A new creation in Christ Jesus is the essential prerequisite in all instances whatsoever of human salvation. The Sabbath-school instructor should understand and profoundly feel this, else he will in all

likelihood fail of the result which he seeks, because he does not direct his efforts to the right object, to his only efficient Helper.

The idea of "conversion," when most prominent in the mind of the teacher, takes him to the child, to his intellect, his heart, his will. The idea of "regeneration," when most prominent, takes the teacher to the Holy Spirit, to his sovereign agency, to his almighty power, to his infinite love. The first makes the teacher a worker together with the child; the second makes him a "worker together with God." And, as we have seen, the divine influence is primary, and must be exerted in order to the right mental and moral action of the child.

With such a view of the work of saving the souls of men, particularly of children, how solemn, how fearfully responsible, is the office of a teacher in the Sabbath-school! Who is sufficient for these things? What a friendship, what a sacred familiarity with the Holy Spirit, are requisite! What an acquaintance with the methods and conditions and circumstances of his gracious operations is needed! What a profound sense of dependence on his august presence, his holy will, must be felt! for he dispenses his gifts and graces according to his own sovereign pleasure. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." How carefully should the teacher order his steps before him! What a place of high communion and earnest wrestling should his closet be!

And, moreover, as the teacher's dependence for its salvation is not upon the will and resolution of the

child, for "it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth," but upon the immediate and efficient energy of the divine Spirit, he himself should seek to become, in connection with the divine word he uses, a channel of mercy to his listening children, "communicating grace," as one apostle says, "to them that hear him;" or, as another has it, "begetting them in the gospel" unto life and salvation. Need we urge that such a teacher should be a prepared channel, a sanctified, humble, loving medium for the grace of the Holy Spirit? If *holy* men of old were selected by God as the conveyancers of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the composition of the Bible, assuredly *holy* men should now be selected by the Church as the conveyancers of the grace of renewal and sanctification. God has appointed not simply the bare word as the chief instrumentality of the Spirit's work, but that word uttered, orally delivered by Christian lips from Christian hearts. "It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching," lay and clerical, "to save them that believe." The teacher should, therefore, himself be a person full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. The word he utters should be a living word, a fire in his bones—a word that penetrates and moves, illumines and constrains him. Then it is most likely to be a word of power wrought into the soul of the hearer by the divine Spirit.

The question is often asked, "Can children, as such, be converted to the Lord Jesus Christ?" The answers will be found to be various. Often grave doubts are suggested; many reserves are made. The *emphasis*, it is true, is not laid so much on the word *can*, on the possibility of their conversion, as on its

unreliability; and the mind is put into a condition of hesitation and difficulty on the subject. This is owing, doubtless, in part at least, to the associations which the word *conversion* excites. The mind fixes itself upon the finite and sinful child, upon his intellectual and moral powers and activities; and such queries as these are started: Do not the requisite mental acts and exercises demand a degree of intelligence and moral balance that little children can scarcely be supposed to possess? Must there not be what is called a "law work," a work of reproof and alarm and conviction, a conscious struggle against sin and Satan and the world, precedent to conversion? And can we, in the inexperienced and relatively unformed minds of little children, rely upon the preliminary steps which lead to true faith and repentance? Thus the subject of the salvation of children is clogged and darkened by questions pertaining to mental and moral philosophy, and zeal for and confidence in the work are greatly abated.

But when the question of *regeneration* is raised the mind is otherwise affected. Another and a totally different class of associations is awakened, and the answer is prompt: "Nothing is impossible with God: he can make Christians out of the stones of the streets." The mind dares not limit the power of the eternal Spirit. We are very ignorant of the mysterious mechanism of the human mind in all its stages from infancy to old age, and we should be exceedingly careful how we traverse the work of its Creator upon its subtle substance. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even

so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." The degree and kind of the understanding of truth requisite to the Holy Spirit's work on a child are beyond our ken. A single seed of truth lodged in his soul in infancy may be made the occasion and instrument of regeneration. And we do not know but that the effectual work of the Spirit may antedate in some children the intellectual apprehension of any truth; that they may be sanctified from the womb, or from baptism, and qualified by the presence and power of the Spirit for a very early apprehension of the truths of the word of God. The Lutheran and Reformed Churches are based upon this conception of the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit in little children. The covenant-promise of the Holy Spirit is "to parents and their children." And the work of regeneration involved in "the promise of the Spirit" is the work primarily regarded and believed in by these churches. The *evidences*, the fruits and manifestations of that work, in the infantile and childish mind, subject as that mind is to the restraints and training and religious habits of a godly home, may be, must be in many cases, difficult to detect before their riper years and larger experience of sin and temptation and the world; but the assumption of these churches, based upon clear Bible revelations, is that the children of believers are regenerated and savingly united to Christ until the contrary is established in their subsequent life; and it is expected that at an early age they will be admitted to the Lord's table. The agency of the Spirit, according to the promise, is taken for granted; and the children of the church are to be looked upon and trained and

treated as renewed and united to Christ, till they themselves disprove it, by their own wilful rejection of the covenant in which they were born, baptized and blessed. This, we say, is the underlying assumption of most, if not of all, the churches of the Protestant world.*

And here another inquiry suggests itself, Will the Spirit of God regenerate Sabbath-school children? May teachers depend on him for this result, and look for it with confidence?

To a very large extent, as we have already observed, our schools are composed of children whose parents are irreligious, who have no personal connection with the churches. It is of these we would particularly speak. We remarked, just now, that an acquaintance with the methods and conditions of the operations of the Holy Spirit is exceedingly important to the successful teacher. Among these we would name, as one of the most signal and essential, that of the existence and use of the *means of sanctification*. Re-

* In the constitution of the Presbyterian Church the following language is used on this subject: I. Children, born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church; and are to be taught to read, and repeat the Catechism, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And, when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed, it is their duty and their privilege to come to the Lord's Supper. II. The years of discretion in young Christians cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership. The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances; and of the time when it is proper to admit young Christians to them.—*Directory for Worship*, chap. ix.

generation is an instantaneous and finished product, when it is effected; and it is ordinarily wrought in view of the subsequent sanctification of the individual This is progressive, a work of time, frequently of many years, running through the entire interval between the regeneration and the death of the person. In the case of the children of believers, the appropriate and appointed means may readily be found. But in the case of others, who constitute the great majority of Sabbath-school classes, it is otherwise. The Bible, the family altar, the recognition of God at the table, the closet, religious conversation and instruction, a holy example—are all wanting; and selfishness, worldliness and godlessness obtain and hold large sway in the household, and sometimes profanity and Sabbath desecration are habitually practiced. The atmosphere of the family is irreligious. Is it not self-evident that in such cases the work of sanctification is, to a fearful extent, precluded? There is no doubt that a little child, brought up under a home influence of this kind, presents a case exceedingly trying to the intelligent faith of a teacher. Is the early regeneration of such children to be expected?

In answering this most pertinent and solemn question we would briefly submit the following observations:

1. In the first place, the providence of God in the institution and vast enlargement of the Sabbath-school must be honoured. This is one of the most distinctive signs of the times in which we live. It is a special manifestation of God's love for children—for children outside of the pale of the visible Church. This divine affection is real and wonderful. Witness

God's word in respect to Nineveh: "Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?" And in our day that love emerges into activity and permanent development as never before in human history. The millions of children that have been brought under the care of the church, through the Sabbath-school, have been so brought by God's all-wise providence, not in judgment, but in mercy—mercy which can be overborne and thwarted only by the infidelity and neglect of his own professing people. The Lord's arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear, but the sins of his people, their coldness, their prayerlessness, and unbelief, and worldliness, may clog and stop the channels of his mercy. This high responsibility has been put upon the church, we may reasonably infer, not without the proffer of the needful supplies of divine influence, looking toward the actual regeneration and salvation of the perishing children. This is one all-important consideration which should sink down into our hearts.

2. In the next place, if this end is to be secured, it must be done within a limited period. There is to all men a day of grace, a space for repentance, a line drawn across their path, visible only to God's eye, beyond which there is no hope. This space is measured not so much by years as by privileges and opportunities. If we take little children under our care, and they are not renewed by the Divine Spirit, the danger is very great that they will become gospel-hardened at an early period. The habit of refusing

the Lord Jesus Christ, and of resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit, formed during the plastic period of childhood, grows rapidly and strikes deep into the soul. It is a lamemtable fact, often mentioned and deplored, that great multitudes of Sabbath-school children cease their connection with the church when they leave the Sabbath-school, and that it is exceedingly difficult to retain under Christian influence very many of them after they have opened into manhood and womanhood. So that, if they are not "born again" while in the Sabbath-school, the likelihood of their subsequent regeneration is immensely diminished. The processes of indwelling sin and Satanic agency are very subtle, very powerful and urgent. And thus it would appear that the existence of the Sabbath-school, while it is a signal token of divine mercy, is, at the same time, a sign of the shortening of the day of grace with large numbers of our population.

3. Assuming now God's willingness and readiness to renew these children, as evidenced by his notable providence, and assuming the solemn exigency in which they are placed by the simple fact of their being in the Sabbath-school, we remark, in the third place, that in order to the accomplishment of the saving work of the Holy Spirit upon them there must be, humanly speaking, earnest and thorough consecration to the salvation of each child on the part of the teachers and of the church—a consecration, hitherto, in a great measure unrealized. If the means of grace and holiness are so largely withheld from them at home, this lack must be supplied, to the utmost degree possible, by those who, in God's providence, have their spiritual welfare in charge. Especially should

the *teacher* seek to take the place of faithless, godless parents. He should be now a father, now a mother, in Christ to their children, a true sponsor, a real godfather and godmother. By frequent visitations at their houses; by taking them one by one to his own house and praying with them, counselling and instructing them; by providing them with suitable Christian reading; by writing letters to them; by a holy and happy example (and all this from year to year), he should supply to the Holy Spirit and to them the means of sanctification. And the church, especially through responsible officers, pre-eminently through her pastor, should continually do all in her power to keep the pressure of eternal and divine things upon the minds and hearts of her children. In this way it would soon be found out that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and heaven. The writer has a friend whose love for souls, and whose labours with God and with them for their salvation, furnish a lesson to us. On a visit paid her a year or two since, she took him into her place of private prayer. In an inner closet, whose door she opened, he noticed the photographs of nineteen persons. He asked her who they were. She replied, they were poor people she was trying to save. She visited them regularly and instructed them carefully, but her great dependence was on God; and she was accustomed to take these photographs, one by one, and put them on a little table she had prepared for the purpose, and then, looking at them, she would kneel, and name their names, and mention their wants and trials to her Father, and plead for mercy in their behalf. Would that we all

rivalled the fidelity, and earnestness, and determination of this lady! Would that Sabbath-school teachers and Christian churches were so imbued with divine grace, were in such deep and vital fellowship with the Holy Spirit, were so heartily persuaded of the depraved, lost and helpless condition of all children by nature, and were so bent on securing God's almighty power in their behalf, that they would make their salvation a matter of deeper concern than their own necessary food! If the spirit of Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel of the covenant, and said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;" if the spirit of Moses, when he said, "This people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold, yet, now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin, and, if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written;" if the spirit of Paul, when he wrote, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh;"— if this were the spirit that possessed Sabbath-school teachers, it would consume their indolence, and worldliness, and selfishness, and consecrate them as thorough, hearty, lifelong workers together with God in this sacred calling. And without this spirit in some good measure, the beneficial effects now derived from the institution would scarcely counterbalance, we fear, the evil which it seals upon the souls of children by reason of its marked shortcomings.

If the views we have presented are just, it follows that the success of the Sabbath-school cause depends upon a mighty outpouring of divine influence upon teachers and scholars. And this is our confidence, that as the providence of God has instituted the sys-

tem, involving such solemn relations and consequences, so the Spirit of God will be given to it, and, by a pentecostal baptism, teachers will be consecrated and filled with the Holy Ghost, and the children will be renewed and flock to the church as the clouds and as doves to their windows. It is the cause of God, and he reigns sovereign and supreme over it; and none can stay the hand of his love, nor resist the energy of his invincible Spirit, when the fountains of the great deep of the divine compassion are broken up, and the time, the set time, to favour Zion has come.

And how evident is it that no work can be named more blessed, and yet more difficult, requiring more assiduity and persistent faithfulness, than that of a Sabbath-school teacher! It is an employment transcending all earthly work, demanding supernal aid, and when properly performed throughout the Church, will speedily usher in the millennial glory. To engage in it perfunctorily and prayerlessly, without a profound and vital sense of dependence on the sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit, is not only to sin against God, but also to sin most grievously and fatally against the souls of the rising generation in our land.

No. 292.

CALL TO THE SACRED OFFICE,

DESIGNED FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF

PIOUS YOUNG MEN,

AND OF

MINISTERS, RULING ELDERS, AND MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

BY JAMES WOOD, D. D.,

ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Tract is a reprint of an article in the "Home, School, and the Church," for 1856, with some additions and emendations, by the author. The Rev. Dr. J. Cogswell of New Brunswick, N. J., has transmitted $10, and the Rev. Dr. J. J. Janeway of the same place, $50, "to aid in its republication and circulation." Dr. Cogswell writes, "I have read the tract *for the third time*, with undiminished satisfaction." Dr. Janeway says of it, "I do not hesitate to express high and cordial approbation of its contents." These expressions of approval from two venerable fathers in the church, accompanied by such substantial evidence of their desire to have it "extensively circulated," will secure for it, we trust, a serious perusal by the officers and members of our churches, and especially by pious young men, who are considering the question of personal duty, with regard to the gospel ministry.

CALL TO THE SACRED OFFICE.

THE subject of a call to the sacred office involves the two-fold inquiry, What is our individual duty with regard to entering this office? and, What is required of us in the way of counsel or encouragement to those who are considering, or who ought to consider, that question? The former inquiry relates chiefly to pious young men, from among whom God usually calls his ministers. The latter claims the special attention of pastors, ruling elders and church members, upon whom rests, in an important sense, the responsibility of furnishing an adequate supply. The question what ought to be done for the increase of the ministry, has received less attention than its importance demands, considering the dearth of ministers and candidates, compared with the wants of the world. Hence though we shall aim to present, for the consideration of students and other pious young men, the chief elements of a divine call to this office, we shall give some prominence to the agency to be performed by the church, in seeking out and encouraging suitable candi-

dates for the ministry. We therefore respectfully invite the attention of those who desire to know their own duty in the case, and of those also, through whose influence the former may be aided in coming to a correct decision. Though due caution should be exercised by our church judicatories to prevent the incompetent and unworthy from entering the sacred office, care should also be taken on the other hand, lest by their neglect of duty many may be led to the choice of secular pursuits, who, with proper instruction and encouragement, would become ministers of the gospel.

As a call to the sacred office is a personal matter, it should be considered with a serious and prayerful spirit. To run uncalled may bring upon us the doom of Uzzah for his unhallowed touching of the ark; and to excuse ourselves from engaging in this work when divinely called to it, is a great sin, like that of which Matthew, Peter, or Paul would have been guilty, if they had declined the service when Christ called them to the apostleship.

A call to the ministry is either extraordinary or ordinary. Of the former was that of the apostles, whose call being peculiar is not applicable in all respects to ministers of the present day. It involved, however, some of the elements belonging to an ordinary call, and hence its consideration will not be irrelevant to the subject of the present essay. There was also a similarity between the call of the apostles and that of the old Testament pro-

phets, and accordingly the latter may be noticed as well as the former. From the several examples which might be adduced, we will select only one from each class, viz. Paul and Isaiah. Their call resembled each other,

1. In its being preceded by an extraordinary vision of the Messiah. In Paul's speech before Agrippa, he says, "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Isaiah says, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried." The evangelist John, alluding to this vision, says, "These things said Esaias when he saw his [Christ's] glory and spake of him."

2. An extraordinary impression was produced upon them by those visions. Paul "fell to the earth," and

"trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." Isaiah exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

3. They received encouragement and comfort from on high. Ananias was sent to Saul with a special message, in obedience to which he "entered into the house, and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Isaiah says, "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

4. A divine unction was communicated to them for their official work. The Lord said to Paul, "Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister," &c. And Paul declares of himself, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Isaiah speaks thus: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me."

5. Following their divine unction for the work, was a distinct call to engage in it. Said Christ to Paul, "Unto whom," *i. e.* to the Gentiles, "now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light," &c. To Isaiah, he said, "Go tell this people," &c. The several antecedents we have mentioned were preparatory to this call, but did not of themselves without this constitute them an apostle and prophet. Their official authority to enter upon their respective embassies, commenced with the words, "I SEND THEE," and "GO AND TELL THIS PEOPLE." Their divine unction, however, was an essential prerequisite, a necessary preparation for their duties, and hence may be regarded as forming a part of their call. The whole scene which they were permitted to witness, though not essential, was also designed to qualify them more abundantly for their arduous and perilous mission, to inspire them with courage, faith, and hope, and such was its effect. Of whom should they be afraid when officiating in the name of One who "maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire?" What ground was there for doubt concerning the issue of their labours, since they went forth at the behest of Him whose "throne is above the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all?"

These examples are very instructive, because, though extraordinary, they contain this general principle, which, it is obvious from other passages of Scripture,

applies to all whom God calls to the sacred office, viz., that he imparts to them, antecedently to their call, those spiritual qualifications which are the fruit of saving grace. Though they cannot say in the same sense that Paul did, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" they can say this in the sense of seeing him by faith. Christ does not call a man to become a minister until he has first called him to be a disciple. Hence the antecedents of a call are those deep and soul-humbling views of himself, and those encouraging and believing views of the Redeemer, which are described in these two cases. In discussing, therefore, the question of a call to the gospel ministry, we assume that a man must be a christian, not only in theory but experience—an experience wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. This being premised, we maintain that a call to the ministry, if genuine, is as truly DIVINE as though it possessed the same characteristics with that of the Apostles. "No man taketh this honour upon himself, save he that is called of God, as was Aaron." The divine will in regard to this matter, is not, however, manifested now in the same way as it was in their case, and hence our present inquiry is simply this, How does God make known his will to those whom he calls to the sacred office? Our answer is, that THE DIVINE WILL IS MADE KNOWN BY THE CONCURRENCE OF ONE'S OWN VIEWS AND FEELINGS WITH THE LEADINGS OF PROVI-

DENCE AND THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH. The particular order in which this concurrence may take place will depend on circumstances. Sometimes a conviction of duty, or at least a desire to prepare for this work, is the first step in the process, and under this state of mind the candidate offers himself to the Church; and her proper officers, after due examination (if satisfied), concur with him in his views, and encourage him to seek the holy ministry. At others, the first step is taken by the Church, whose pastor, elders, or members, either officially or otherwise, express their belief that such and such persons belonging to their communion possess the requisite qualifications for the sacred office; and their impressions, when conveyed to these brethren and prayerfully considered by them, produce a conviction of duty in conformity with the views previously expressed by the Church. Whether the one or the other be the antecedent or the consequent is not material in our present inquiry. But for the sake of a more clear and full presentation of the subject, we shall give to each a distinct notice.

I. Consider the manifestation of a call as commencing with the candidate himself, in a conviction of duty that he ought to enter the sacred office. This feeling has been commonly expressed by the word *desire*, which, though not identical with a *conviction of duty*, is often so nearly allied to it that both convey to many minds

substantially the same idea. The existence of this desire at some point in the process is presupposed, and its nature defined in one of the questions propounded to candidates for ordination in the Presbyterian Church. "Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry, from love to God, and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?" It is also implied in Paul's epistle to Timothy, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

A conviction of duty is sometimes produced in his breast without any assignable cause, and it becomes so strong that he is not able to suppress it. The biographer of the Rev. Samuel Kilpin, of Exeter, England, states concerning him as follows: "Some time after this period" (his conversion), "his mind became impressed with the duty of preaching to others that gospel which he had found to be the power of God unto the salvation of his own soul. It bore on his mind with so much weight that his health was affected. He had the most solemn ideas of the responsibility of the sacred office, and the necessity of a clear call from God. After many months spent in strong cries and earnest wrestlings with God, his feelings on the subject were so intense, that he has been heard to say he lay prostrate under some trees, and, with feelings which none but God could comprehend, agonized in prayer that the impressions on his mind

might be removed; but the answer appeared to be, 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel! a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.' At length with deep humility and self-abhorrence, relying on the Saviour's strength, he permitted his mind to dwell on the subject, and could view it with calmness. His desire for the salvation of souls was intense; he longed, he wrestled for their salvation. The Church encouraged him, and he was invited to exercise his gifts for the ministry. The unanimous opinion of the minister and Church decided that it was his duty to proceed."

But more frequently this conviction of duty is the result of reflection. A *willingness* to do what God requires is an essential element of true piety. But the particular direction in which this spirit finds an appropriate sphere of usefulness is controlled in a great degree by circumstances, which sometimes are such as to favour this particular calling, and at others to discourage or prevent it. The former is the point now under discussion. The licensure of a friend to preach the gospel, our own solemn vows to be the Lord's, disappointment with regard to a favourite worldly scheme, or some other providential occurrence may call the mind to a special consideration of this subject, as the fruit of which our willingness to serve God in any sphere which duty requires, may ripen into a desire for this particular work, and a belief that we are called to engage in it; and this desire becomes in due

time a fixed purpose, subject only to the concurring voice of Providence and the Church. Hence, a serious and prayerful consideration of the question of duty in this particular, is imperative on all our pious young men. If, with prayerful deliberation, and with docile, willing hearts, they inquire with Saul after his conversion, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" God will in due time send some Ananias to "tell them what they ought to do."

Let the sentiment already advanced be deeply fixed in their minds, viz., that they have entered into a solemn covenant to serve the Lord, and by implication that they will serve him to the utmost of their ability. Hence it becomes a serious question, which every young man should put to his own conscience, whether he can or cannot do more for his divine Master by preaching the gospel than in any other sphere? and his decision should be made in view of this momentous question, and with the recollection that he must hereafter give account to God for the manner he has improved his talents.

Again, we must not forget that a *desire* to preach the gospel (if it assumes the form of a desire), must be *pious* in its character. There may be a readiness, amounting even to forwardness, to become a minister of the gospel, from improper motives, and of course without the promptings of the Holy Spirit. These motives, if discovered to exist within us, should be checked and suppressed. Said

one to Christ, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Our Saviour's reply shows that he was influenced by mercenary motives—that he sought promotion and worldly gain, and hence, while in that state of mind, he was utterly unfit for the sacred office. In order to rebuke this spirit, he said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." As much as to say, "You entirely mistake the nature of this calling—it is not a vocation which affords large opportunities for worldly emolument, but one which requires self-denial." A selfish man, or one who is grasping after wealth, or who possessing wealth, holds it with a miserly spirit, lacks an important qualification for the ministerial office, in which there is a constant demand for the exercise of a benevolent and self-sacrificing disposition. Yet, as divine grace can cure an inordinate love of the world, as well as any other evil propensity, its existence is not always a decisive evidence that its possessor has no call to the holy ministry. This mercenary spirit should be resisted and overcome by asking God's forgiveness for possessing it, and imploring his grace to enable us to exercise and practise that exalted and expansive benevolence which characterized our divine Lord.

The same remark holds good with reference to any other defect which may be cured by a faithful and diligent use of the means of grace. We will mention a sin-

gle thing, the very converse of that which we have just stated, viz., that as our desire for the ministry is liable to be prompted by wrong motives, which we are required to rectify, so, on the other hand, an improper desire for wealth or worldly honour may *prevent* us from seeking this office, even when we are more or less convinced that our duty lies in this direction. Here desire and conviction of duty, instead of being the same, or even in harmony with each other, are antagonistic, and unhappily, our earnestness and anxiety for earthly emolument too often obtain the ascendency, and lead us to engage in secular pursuits, against the remonstrances of our own consciences, to say nothing now of the leadings of Providence, and the voice of the Church. The young men of our country are probably in greater danger, at the present time, of being diverted from the path of duty in this particular by the splendid openings which lie before them to obtain wealth, than from any other source. Let them be reminded that, though the acquisition of wealth is not wrong in itself, it becomes a great wrong when it stands in the way of performing a higher duty to which God calls them. If their consciences admonish them that they ought to seek the gospel ministry, there is ground for believing that those desires which are in conflict with this conviction of duty are not of a right character, particularly if divine Providence and the judgment of christian friends concur in favouring their becoming minis-

ters. Under these circumstances, to say we have no desire for the ministry, is a virtual confession of a perverted state of our affections, and our need of repentance and reformation. Let our affections be brought into harmony with our consciences, and, in the case now supposed, a desire for this office would be sure to follow.

Hence we are better prepared to decide correctly concerning our duty, when we enjoy our best religious frames. Though zeal, love for souls, and a desire to do good, are not decisive of a man's call to preach the gospel, yet the want of these will be almost sure to bring him to an opposite decision. A cold and worldly frame of mind unfits a christian for any spiritual duty, and makes him reluctant to engage in it. If, under these circumstances, we desired to convince him of the duty of family prayer, or of leading the devotional exercises of a social prayer-meeting, our most serious obstacle would be the state of his affections. And accordingly our first endeavour would be to revive his christian graces. So in the case under consideration. Not a few, we fear, have been turned aside from the sacred office by a departure from their first love, in which state of mind their former convictions of duty have been overcome by avarice or ambition; and under these counter-influences they have engaged in other professions. Their employment may be honest and honourable in itself, and yet, being pursued when their duty lies in another direction, it is fraught with evil to their souls.

A well-known minister, now deceased, informed the writer that he had received a letter from a friend to the following effect:—that he pursued a course of literary and classical studies, with a view to the gospel ministry, but that under the influence of aspiring and ambitious feelings, fostered by worldly-minded and irreligious kindred, he was diverted from his purpose, and devoted himself to the study of law. He made gratifying proficiency in preparing for the legal profession, and had before him every reasonable prospect of success. But from the moment he determined to abandon the gospel ministry and study law, God appeared to forsake him; he lost his former spirit of prayer, and religious comfort departed from his breast. At length, under the pressure of strong conviction of duty, urged upon his conscience by an agent of the Board of Education, whom he heard preach, he was led to retrace his steps, and consecrate himself anew to the service of the church, and to that sacred office to which, as he believed, he had once been called. The letter above referred to was written to inform his old friend of his decision, and to tell him, moreover, that its influence upon his piety and christian enjoyment, was almost instantaneous; that his communion with God was no longer intercepted, as before, by insurmountable barriers; his graces seemed to have a more vigorous growth, and his "peace was like a river."*

* This and some other illustrations which follow were published

Perhaps there are many young men in the Presbyterian Church, who, against the call of God, and their own convictions of duty, are turning away their minds from this high and holy vocation, to engage in some secular pursuit. If so, can they expect to be prospered? Especially, can they hope for "peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost?" The path of duty is the only one in which a man can secure the divine favour. And in order to know what duty requires, we must live near to him. "In his light shall we see light."

Again, in connection with a spiritual frame of mind, which is important to qualify us to judge correctly on this subject, we are encouraged to offer *special prayer* for divine direction. The injunction to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers, involves the petition, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" Though we are not to expect an answer by a voice from heaven, like that given to Paul, we have a divine promise, which is applicable to this subject, as well as to others, that if we ask in faith, we shall be guided in the path of duty. Even in Paul's case, the only miraculous response which he received was, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do," *i. e.* it shall be told by Ananias, who was afterward sent to him for this purpose. By this direction God put honour upon the

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by the author in the Home and Foreign Record in several numbers of the years 1854–5.

ordinary method, which he has ordained for teaching us our duty: viz., by the decision of our own judgments enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and concurred in by the judgments of others who are enlightened in like manner. According to this view, we remark further, that we ought to seek the advice of pious and judicious friends. We say *pious* friends. A resort to irreligious and worldly-minded friends, on such a subject, will be very liable to mislead and ensnare us, or at least to become an obstacle in the way of performing our duty. But if they are pious and devoted christians, and entertain scriptural views concerning the ministerial office, their counsel ought to be sought, and when given, it should have great weight, whether it be in accordance with our own previous views, or adverse to them. Our *desires* may be *pious*, and our motives *pure*, we may even think it to be our *duty*, and still we may not be called to preach the gospel. There may be a lack of suitable talents, or of aptness to teach, or of bodily health, or our age may be so advanced as to render it impracticable to obtain the requisite education. In these cases, the desire to do good, being genuine, should not be checked as to its general character, but directed to such other sphere of usefulness as the leadings of Providence and the advice of judicious and intelligent christian friends shall appear to indicate. With regard to these several particulars, others are generally better judges than we are. If, for

the reasons above given, disinterested christian advisers express doubts concerning our call, and especially if this is done in their official capacity, as office bearers in the Church, we may safely conclude, as a general thing, that we are not called to seek the gospel ministry.

Even though preparation may have been made, and the candidate is permitted to exercise his gifts as a licentiate, he may, after all, prove to be so defective in his ability to edify the Church, as to show that he has mistaken his calling. On this assumption, the constitution of the Presbyterian Church provides that, "When a licentiate shall have been preaching for a considerable time, and his services do not appear to be edifying to the churches, the Presbytery may, if they think proper, recall his license." In this view of the case, a man's call to the ministry should not be regarded as being fully and finally settled, until the way is opened for his ordination, either by a call from some church to become their pastor, or such a call to some other field of labour as will justify the Presbytery in investing him with the sacred office. He may, however, long before this, have sufficient evidence to make it his duty to obtain the necessary preparation; but as he proceeds in his preliminary studies, he should frequently bring his desires and convictions of duty to the test of a rigid examination, both in the way of inspecting his own feelings and motives, and in ascertaining the views of others concerning his fitness

for the ministry. By this process, faithfully carried out, he would seldom fail of arriving at a satisfactory decision before completing his college course—a decision which the Presbytery would find no occasion to reverse.

II. The views and feelings of a young man with regard to his duty to preach the gospel, must be corroborated by the leadings of divine Providence. This kind of evidence is available both to the person himself, in strengthening or diminishing his conviction of duty, and to the Church, in forming a correct judgment concerning his call to this office. We have already given this a partial and incidental notice in discussing the preceding point, but it is entitled to a separate and distinct consideration.

We have heard a call of Providence defined to be the opening of this door of usefulness and the shutting up of every other. In some rare cases this may be so, but, ordinarily, no such constraint is laid by God upon his servants. He opens this door, and indicates to them, by his Providence, that they ought to enter it. But he does not generally close other doors against them, but he submits the question to their decision, as free moral agents, and in view of their accountability to him. We have reason to believe that this decision is not always made with a proper regard to the leadings of Providence, but often contrary to them. Sometimes, probably, the error lies in entering the ministry without sufficient providen-

tial indications, but, more frequently, in engaging in other pursuits when Providence had opened the way for their becoming ministers of the gospel.

Under the head of providential indications may be mentioned, as having a general bearing on the question of duty, the scarcity of ministers, compared with the wants of the world, and the readiness of men in all countries to receive the gospel. If, as is the fact, a hundred ministers are needed where ten only offer themselves, the presumption is, that there are ninety others, somewhere in the Church, who ought to enter the sacred office. And hence our pious young men, in reflecting upon the subject of personal duty, and our pastors and church judicatories, in deliberating with regard to them, should not overlook this fact. But still, this evidence is only presumptive, and must be corroborated by other favourable circumstances, in order to make it satisfactory in its application to a particular case.

These circumstances are such as the following: viz., good natural talents, a sound bodily constitution, a suitable age, if not educated, to acquire a thorough intellectual training, a capacity for communicating knowledge to others, an elevated tone of piety, love for the souls of men, and zeal in seeking their salvation. The first half and more of this category are readily understood and appreciated. All sensible men concur in the views already expressed, that persons of feeble mind, or poor health,

or advanced age, or who are cut off from the means of acquiring adequate instruction, or who are unable to utter their thoughts with considerable ease and fluency, should be regarded as providentially prevented from entering the ministry. But when we come to those particulars which are religious and spiritual, and attempt to graduate our piety, or the piety of our brethren, and to measure the strength and fervour of their desire to promote the salvation of sinners, the examination assumes a more difficult, and, with reference to them, a delicate aspect. The fact, however, is undeniable, that there may be those who have none of those disabilities above mentioned, and yet are so deficient in piety and zeal as to be poorly fitted for the "cure of souls." In what respect this low state of piety is providential is another matter. Certainly it is not so in such a sense as to exculpate them from blame. It is their sin, and should be repented of without delay. They should return to God with humble and earnest prayer, and employ scriptural means for a revival of religion in their hearts. When they have done this, they may find the path of duty opened before them, in a manner satisfactory both to themselves and the Church. But so long as they continue in this cold and backslidden state, all the other providential indications above mentioned are insufficient to show that they have a divine call to preach the gospel. This is a vital point, and demands the serious consideration of pious young men. Let them make it

the first business of their lives to become eminently holy and devoted to God, to be diligent and "zealous of good works." Their devout feelings, thus enlightened, would, in many instances, prompt them to offer themselves to the service of the Church, and their brethren would cheerfully receive, encourage, and educate them as candidates for the sacred office. There are not a few preparing for other pursuits who possess most or all the natural endowments which belong to a providential call to the ministry, but lack the requisite unction of the Holy Spirit, and this, if they seek it, God will grant, with the same freeness that a tender parent bestows good things upon his children.

To illustrate by example, what we regard as a call of Providence, we will mention the case of the Rev. Charles Beatty, an eminent minister of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States, in the early period of her history. The Rev. William Tennent, who emigrated from Ireland in 1716, established a classical and theological school, near the Neshaminy, Pa., some twenty miles north of Philadelphia, in which he educated his four sons, Gilbert, William, John and Charles, together with a number of other young men. This school was known as the "Log College," and was the means of preparing for the sacred office a considerable number of the most useful and distinguished ministers of that day.

Mr. Beatty was a native of Ireland. He obtained a

classical education in his own country; but his circumstances being narrow, he migrated to America, and employed several of the first years of his residence on this side of the Atlantic, in the business of a travelling merchant. In the pursuit of this vocation, he halted one day at the "Log College." To Mr. Tennent's surprise, he addressed him in correct Latin, and appeared to be familiar with that language. After much conversation, in which Mr. Beatty manifested fervent piety, and considerable religious knowledge, as well as a good education in other respects, Mr. Tennent addressed him thus: "You must give up your present employment. Go and sell the contents of your pack, and return immediately and study with me. It will be a sin for you to continue a pedler, when you may be so much more useful in another profession." He accepted Mr. Tennent's offer; returned to Neshaminy; completed there his academical and theological studies, and in due time became an eminent minister. He died in Barbadoes, about the year 1765, whither he had gone to solicit benefactions for the College of New Jersey. This account is taken chiefly from Dr. Miller's memoirs of Dr. Rodgers. It is also found in Dr. Alexander's History of the "Log College," published by the Board of Publication.

No intimation is given in this narrative, that Mr. Beatty had felt any conviction of duty or even a desire to become a minister of the gospel, up to the time of

his providential interview with Mr. Tennent. But whether he had or not, is immaterial in our present inquiry. As we have already observed, this desire may either precede or follow a call of Providence. It was so ordered by Him who controls all human events, that in pursuing his ordinary secular employment, he should stop at the "Log College," that Mr. Tennent should be at home and be disengaged; that they should converse with each other, and that their conversation should be on such topics, and of such a character as to develope Mr. Beatty's talents, education and fervent piety. It was also further ordered that these developments should be made to one who was competent to judge of the qualifications requisite for the sacred office, and who could offer him the facilities he needed for completing his preparation; and finally that the favourable impression made on Mr. Tennent's mind as to Mr. Beatty's fitness for the ministry, and his belief that he ought to engage in it, should be communicated to him by Mr. Tennent, and the offer promptly and generously made to give him a place in his school and a home in his family.

These several circumstances (as we infer from the result) were indications of divine Providence, that Mr. Beatty should become a minister of the gospel. Though not of themselves a decisive proof of a call, they formed a remarkable link in the chain of evidence, and when

taken in connection with the circumstances which followed, the whole together made the evidence conclusive. Mr. Tennent expressed to him his belief that he ought to become a preacher of the gospel; a corresponding conviction was produced in his own mind, and these views were in due time corroborated and sustained by the Presbytery, by whose authority he was inducted into the sacred office. Hence we may remark, that in deciding the question of duty on this subject, we ought to notice the indications of Providence. If these appear to favour our entering the ministry, and if our own views and feelings lead us in the same direction, we should submit the question to our brethren in the Lord; and should they also be of the same opinion, we may regard our evidence of a divine call as being sufficiently clear and satisfactory.

Another thrilling example, illustrative of a call of Providence, we take from a late number of the "Christian Observer." The article is headed "I WANT TO BE A MINISTER," and the narrative is given in the following words:

More than a century ago, there lived in England an orphan boy of no ordinary promise. From his early childhood, "I want to be a minister," was his chief desire; but being deprived not only of the counsel of a father and the affection of a mother, but also of the necessary amount of money to carry out his cherished desire, his youthful spirit was bowed to the earth, and

his noble heart throbbed only with feelings of bitter disappointment and despair.

But a brighter day dawns. There is a prospect for his ardent desire to be gratified. A wealthy lady kindly volunteers to pay all his expenses at the University of Oxford, if he will become a minister of the Church of England.

His noble spirit is too proud to sell the religion of his father and mother for the perishable riches of this world, and he most respectfully declines the proffered kindness. God bless thee, noble youth! Wait patiently—don't despair—never give up—"where there's a will, there's a way." Thy father and thy mother were Dissenters; therefore cling to their religion as a drowning man would to a cord thrown out to save him, let the consequences be what they may. The path of duty is always the path of right.

Not long after this occurrence, a poor boy, dressed in the garb of poverty, presented himself at the door of a celebrated minister, and asked to have a private interview with him relative to studying for the ministry. The minister listened patiently to the recital of his many difficulties and numerous trials, but told him that he thought it entirely unheard of, for a youth like himself to think about entering upon so high and responsible a calling. He advised him to think no more of preaching, but to choose some other calling.

Disheartened at himself, discouraged by his friends, poor, penniless and forsaken, he knew not whither to go. No smile of encouragement met his eye; no voice of approval sanctioned his noble endeavour. There was one Friend, however, who had never forsaken him; who had never turned a deaf ear even to his smallest desire; who had ever loved him with fatherly affection and motherly tenderness. To that Friend he then betook himself, and when engaged in fervent prayer, a postman knocked at the door, and handed him a letter from an old friend of his father, informing him of his willingness to take him under his care and assist him in his studies, if he was still intent upon studying for the ministry. "This," he exclaimed, "I look upon almost as an answer from heaven, and while I live I shall always adore so seasonable an opening of divine Providence."

The wishes of the poor orphan boy were thus gratified; and before many years had passed away, under the guidance and instruction of his friend, he became a bright and shining light on the walls of Zion.

Youthful reader, this orphan boy was PHILIP DODDRIDGE—the pious and devoted minister of Christ, the beautiful writer, the faithful pastor, the brilliant christian.

If there be any one, adds the writer, into whose hands this article may fall, who, like Doddridge, "wants to be a minister," and is prevented from accomplishing his de-

sire on account of want of means, let me say one word—*never despair!* If God wants you to be a minister, he will provide the means. Wait patiently, and pray earnestly.

The above account is narrated more particularly in Dr. Doddridge's "Correspondence and Diary," vol. 1st, pp. 22—26. The wealthy lady alluded to, was the Duchess of Bedford, who offered to educate him "at either of the Universities, if he would resolve to dedicate himself to the (established) Church as a future profession." The celebrated minister was Dr. Edmund Calamy, who "gave him no encouragement, but advised him to turn his thoughts to something else." And the old friend of his father, was the Rev. Samuel Clark, who "offered to take him under his care, if he chose the ministry on christian principles." Mr. Clark was "pastor of the nonconformist congregation of St. Albans, into whose church he had been previously admitted as a member." The discouragement he received from Dr. Calamy, is believed by the editor to have been owing to "the extreme delicacy of Mr. Doddridge's constitution," and "the hope of preserving the youthful candidate from the toils and anxieties of a profession, to which his strength appeared unequal." After this discouragement, he directed his attention to the study of law, in which he made great proficiency, and received an advantageous proposal to engage in business from a gentleman of the legal pro-

fession. But his mind not being satisfied with the idea of abandoning all thoughts of entering the gospel ministry, he earnestly sought direction from above, when in answer to his prayer, divine Providence opened the door as above related, for accomplishing his desires.

III. The voice of the Church concurring with a young man's convictions of duty and the leadings of Providence completes the evidence of his divine call to the gospel ministry. The duty of the Church however is not fully discharged when, through her judicatories, she sits in judgment on the fitness of those who offer themselves for this work. Measures should be adopted for bringing this subject distinctly before the minds of her members, and, if need be, for expressing to them, either officially or unofficially, her own convictions of their duty to preach the gospel.

In an important sense indeed, it does not belong to the Church, but to God, to decide the question, who and how many shall become preachers of the gospel. He is the author of their regeneration; and when converted, it is his prerogative to call such as he pleases to the office of the gospel ministry. Prayer to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers is the first and great duty of God's people. If, as we have remarked, pious young men ought to pray earnestly with reference to their own duty in the case, so also should the Church offer prayer both for the increase of ministers, and for

the divine designation and anointing of those whom it is God's pleasure to call to this office. This duty is expressly enjoined by our blessed Lord. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Unless *he* sends them, they will preach without authority, and may expect to labour in vain. Let this prayer be offered with a deep impression of the spiritual destitutions expressed in the words, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;" and with that tender compassion for the souls of men which moved the Saviour's heart, when "he saw the multitudes scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." When such a spirit of grace and supplication as this shall be poured out on the church of God, his "set time to favour Zion will come," and, "great will be the company of those who publish his word."

But there is likewise an important sense in which God's people are responsible for furnishing those materials out of which preachers are ordinarily called; and also for the proper direction of their minds to the question of personal duty with regard to this office. The materials for future ministers are generally found within our churches; either as communicants, or in a state of ecclesiastical pupilage. Hence the churches may be properly appealed to on this subject; and if delinquent, they should be exhorted to employ scriptural means to bring young men into the sacred office. To the use or neglect

of these means, may be ascribed, as we believe, in a great measure, the large difference between the number of candidates in different churches. We could name one church which has been organized twenty-five years, and has furnished from her members twenty-five candidates; and a second, older and stronger than the other, which has furnished only two or three. The latter church, too, has enjoyed, as well as the former, some precious revivals of religion, and the additions to her communion have consisted of a good proportion of young men. But their attention seems not to have been called particularly to the subject of personal consecration to the ministry. As laymen, they are useful men; but many of them might have become acceptable, and some of them able preachers. Can that church give a satisfactory answer to the question, why they have failed to raise up among themselves their due proportion of ministers of the gospel? "It is imperative, first of all," observes the Rev. John Angel James, "to have the truth deeply engraven upon all hearts, that *the Church is the conservator of the christian ministry*, and that it is her business and almost her first and most important business, to see that she discharges well her duty in this momentous affair." Again, "A church *without* such a conservative principle cannot be the Church of the New Testament." And further, "Nothing but a spiritual church can provide a spiritual ministry." A church

therefore, that has no candidates for the ministry, gives sad evidence either of great spiritual declension, or of a serious neglect of duty with regard to this particular point. If she possessed the vital energy of a living faith, and if this specific blessing should be made one of the objects for which she daily and weekly offered up her prayers, and if it should also have its appropriate place in the instructions of the pulpit, we doubt whether she would remain long without enjoying the privilege of having constantly among her members one or more candidates for this office.

As a general thing, there is less occasion for the Church to rebuke the officious and self-conceited forwardness of young men who offer themselves uncalled to the sacred office, than to seek out those who, like Saul, are "hid among the stuff," and are indisposed to engage in a work for which they possess the requisite qualifications. Some are diffident and unassuming, and for this reason are not inclined to take the first step toward entering an office, the responsibilities of which weighed so heavily even on the Apostle Paul, as to draw from him the solemn interrogatory, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The Church is not to wait for such to offer themselves, but must propose the question to *them*, and remove from their minds those objections which a mistaken humility has interposed to prevent them from performing their duty in this respect.

Others again are "hid among the stuff" from secular considerations, and need to be addressed faithfully and earnestly by their christian brethren, on the claims of the gospel ministry, as compared with secular avocations. One needs instruction; a second to have his conscience aroused; a third a more fervent and elevated tone of piety; and the want of some one of these may be the main obstacle in the way of their seeking the gospel ministry. Parents, elders, pastors, and professors and teachers in colleges and academies, are the persons whose positions are peculiarly favourable for reaching these cases; and if through their neglect such young men are not brought into the ministry, will not the Head of the Church hold them responsible for the deficiency of the ministerial supply which may result from this omission of duty? While, therefore, we ought to caution those who, without sufficient reason, think themselves called, we must remember that those who are called, are usually brought forward by the agency of religious advisers, and that advice, if not sought for by them, should be volunteered by us, accompanied by such encouragement as the circumstances may require.

In M'Crie's Life of that distinguished reformer, John Knox, we find the following account of his call to the ministry: "These persons were so pleased with Knox's talents, and his manner of teaching his pupils, that they urged him strongly to preach in public, and to become

colleague to Rough. But he resisted all their solicitations, assigning as his reason, that he did not consider himself as having a call to this employment, and he would not be guilty of intrusion. They did not, however, desist from their purpose; but having consulted with their brethren, came to a resolution, without his knowledge, that a call should be publicly given him, in the name of the whole, to become one of their ministers.

"Accordingly, on a day fixed for the purpose, Rough preached a sermon on the election of ministers, in which he declared the power which any congregation, however small, had over any one in whom they perceived gifts suited to the office, and how dangerous it was for such a person to reject the call of those who desired instruction. Sermon being concluded, the preacher turned to Knox, who was present, and addressed him in these words: 'Brother, you shall not be offended, although I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those here present, which is this: In the name of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of all that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you, that you refuse not this holy vocation, but as you tender the glory of God, the increase of Christ's kingdom, the edification of your brethren, and the comfort of me, whom you understand well enough to be oppressed with the multitude of labours, that you take the public

office and charge of preaching, even as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure, and desire that he shall multiply his graces unto you.' Then addressing himself to the congregation, he said, 'Was not this your charge unto me, and do you not approve this vocation?' They all answered, 'It was; and we approve it.'

"Overwhelmed by this unexpected and solemn charge, Knox, after an ineffectual attempt to address the audience, burst into tears, rushed out of the assembly, and shut himself in his chamber. His countenance and behaviour, from that day till the day he was compelled to present himself in the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart, for no man saw any sign of mirth from him for many days together."

Similar instances have occurred since. In the funeral discourse of the Rev. Gilbert MacMaster, D. D., of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the preacher stated that he entered upon the practice of medicine at Pittsburg, Pa., and that, at a meeting of the Synod of his Church in that city some time after, he was visited by a committee of Synod, and informed that, in the judgment of that committee and of the other members of that body who were acquainted with him, it was his duty to change his profession, and become a minister of the gospel. He listened to their counsel, and, after prayerful deliberation, commenced the study of theology. He lived to an ad-

vanced age, having, before his decease, served the church in the gospel ministry, and in a highly useful and distinguished manner, for more than thirty years.

These general hints and illustrations, concerning the province of the Church in this matter, may be greatly amplified. To a few of them we will give some further notice.

1. It is the duty of every church to see that no one in her communion, who ought to become a preacher of the gospel, is kept back for want of proper instruction concerning the nature of a call to this office. As soon as a young man is received into the Church, he should be encouraged and urged, if necessary, to engage in some useful service, whereby his capacity and zeal for doing good may be tested, cultivated, and improved. And if this trial of his qualifications is satisfactory, his attention should be directed particularly to the question of duty with regard to the sacred office, accompanied by such instruction and advice as will aid him in arriving at a correct conclusion. Sometimes pious friends have reason to think that a man is called, before he realizes it himself. His mind may have been directed to it; he may be impressed with the great necessity of more labourers to meet the wants of a perishing world. But he scarcely ventures even to inquire whether it may not be *his own duty* to preach the gospel—assuming, without particular examination, that he is not called to this work. Samuel

was called to the prophetical office when he was quite young. The call was audible; it was addressed to him by name and repeated thrice. Yet he did not know that it was from the Lord, until Eli instructed him; after which, when "the Lord came, and stood, and called, as at other times, Samuel, Samuel," he answered, "Speak, for thy servant heareth." Mr. Kilpin, who has been already alluded to, considered his "first impressions relating to the ministry," as "the delusions of the devil," and used to spend "hours in the fields, under hedges, by night and by day, praying that the great God would deliver him from those delusions." This "anxiety brought on a weakness in his stomach, which refused to retain anything he had eaten, during one year, and reduced him almost to a shadow." What a relief it would have been to his mind, if the pastor and church, instead of waiting for him to disclose his feelings to *them*, and ask their advice, had addressed *him* on the subject, and given him their views concerning his duty!

2. The officers of the church, and particularly the pastor, should impress upon the minds of all their members the *importance* of the office, as compared with secular avocations—that it is in no respect inferior to them in dignity, and that a man of the first order of talents is not degraded but honoured by being called to this office—that there is a far greater necessity for an increase of ministers than of men for any other profession—that the

work to be done is more intimately connected with the welfare of the human race than any other,* and that the demand for more labourers is immediate and cannot be neglected, or even postponed, by God's people, without a serious dereliction of duty. These thoughts, kept before the minds of parents and children, and especially of the young men of the church, would produce a silent but

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*From a speech of Hon. David K. Hitchcock, before the Massachusetts Senate, we take the following paragraph:

"What other class of men, as a class, have better deserved public recognition and favour? What other class have done more to set forward the cause of true freedom, and so little to hold it back? The oft-quoted words of Webster should not be forgotten—'I hope,' says he, 'that our learned men have done something for the honour of our literature abroad. I hope that the courts of justice and members of the bar of this country have done something to elevate the character and the profession of the law. I hope that the discussions in Congress have done something to ameliorate the condition of the human race, to secure and extend the great charter of human rights, and to strengthen and advance the great principle of human liberty. But I contend that no literary efforts, no adjudications, no constitutional discussions, nothing that has been said or done, in favour of the great interests of universal man, has done us more credit at home and abroad than the establishment of our body of clergymen, their support by voluntary contributions, and the general excellence of their character for learning and piety.' Mr. Webster elsewhere speaks of 'their devotedness to their sacred calling, purity of life and character, their learning, intelligence, and piety, and that wisdom which cometh from above.' He might have added, their devotion to the principles of true liberty."

constant influence, in calling out those whose talents ought to be devoted to the holy ministry.

With regard to young men, not only should the attention of those be called to this subject, who have not as yet engaged in other pursuits, but of those, also, who have, provided they are not advanced too far in life. If they are sufficiently *educated*, there may be important reasons why they should be asked to consider the question, whether they ought not to change their profession, and become ministers of the gospel? Their characters are formed, and therefore they have no period of probation to pass through, like the more youthful and untried candidates, before they acquire the confidence of the Church. The great progress they have made in education, will enable them to enter the ministry in a much shorter time than is requisite for those who are younger and uneducated. Their enlarged knowledge of mankind, adapts them peculiarly (other things being equal) to the wants of the present age. Add to these considerations the well-known facts, that a change from other professions, particularly the legal, to that of the gospel ministry, is no uncommon occurrence, and that a considerable number of our most useful and influential ministers once practised or studied law. These facts show that professional men, who are pious and in the prime of life, ought not to be regarded by their pastors and other christian friends as having certainly and permanently settled this great question; and

hence they should be seriously asked to take the matter into prayerful consideration. To *students* who have other professions in view, but have not entered upon them, the above remarks apply with special force.

3. Objections which may arise in their minds, upon presenting this subject to their consideration, must be removed, and the decision of the question solemnly referred to their consciences, in view of the fact that their christian brethren (where the case is plain) regard it as their duty to preach the gospel. This assumes (what we think is true) that they may be talented and pious, and, in a general sense, willing to do their duty, but that various reasons conspire to make them hesitate with regard to this vocation. In some it may be diffidence; as in the case of Moses, who, when he was designated by God as the deliverer of the Israelites from Egypt, replied, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Or of Jeremiah, who in view of his appointment to be "a prophet unto the nations," said, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child." God encouraged them by the promise that he would be with them,—a promise which is applicable to all pious and humble-minded men whom he calls to labour in his service.

In others worldly considerations, or the influence of secular-minded friends, lead to the same result. Two

cases of this kind are recorded by the evangelist Luke. One of them, in response to our Lord's command, "Follow me," replied, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Whatever may be the specific import of these words, they convey the general idea of filial duty. He deemed himself under obligation to render certain services to his father, requiring some indefinite period, longer or shorter, which services he regarded as paramount, for the time being, to the call of Christ. Our Saviour's answer to this objection, was "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God." He did not design by this, to absolve him from filial duties. On one occasion, he expressed strong disapprobation of some who, under the pretext of a religious vow, refused to support their aged parents But in the present instance, the person laboured under a mistake as to what duty required. The kind attention and service which he desired to render were necessary; but they could be performed by other members of the family as well as by him, and hence, it was not indispensable for him to do these things *personally*, since he could easily make arrangements to have them done by others, who were not called to preach the gospel.

In the other case, the person expressed a willingness to follow him, but desired first to "go and bid them farewell which were at home at his house." This request might *admit* of a favourable construction, but to the mind of

our Saviour who saw his heart, it conveyed more than the words seemed to indicate. "He was willing," says Henry, "to enter into a temptation from his purpose of following Christ. To go bid them *farewell* that were *at home at his house*, would be to expose himself to the strongest solicitations imaginable to alter his resolution, for they would all be against it, and would *beg* and *pray* that he would not *leave them;* now it was presumptuous in him to thrust himself into such a temptation." This view of the matter is favoured, and we think sustained, by Christ's reply, which shows that the man was vacillating and undecided in his mind, and that he would be in danger of becoming more so, by a visit to his relatives. "No man," says Christ, "having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." A ploughman who looks back, cannot make a straight furrow. So a man who is undetermined about his duty, after it is made sufficiently evident, exhibits a state of mind which renders him incompetent to labour with efficiency and success. Christ, therefore, warned him of the hazard of placing himself under those domestic influences, which he could not but know would be likely to increase his doubts and divert his mind altogether from this holy calling.

A few days ago, we learned from a reliable source (the names of the parties were given to us) that a pious young man in Pennsylvania, of fine talents and scholarship, the

son of a clergyman, became fascinated while in college with a young lady, the daughter of a clergyman, who was also president of the college. She was ambitious of literary distinction for the person whom she might marry, and had aspirations of the same kind herself. To a proposal of marriage from this gentleman, she consented on condition that he would pledge himself not to enter the gospel ministry. He reluctantly yielded to this condition, and the engagement was made. Subsequently he was so much impressed with a conviction of his error in this particular, that he endeavoured, but without success, to obtain from her a release from that pledge. They were married; he did not enter the ministry; but he was often rendered unhappy, by what he deemed a neglect of duty. About four years ago, he was called away by death, and in his last moments, he expressed regret that he had ever made that promise.

Where these counter influences are known to exist, the pastor and session of the Church have a solemn duty to discharge toward those who are exposed to them, in endeavouring to prevent this injurious effect; especially if they are satisfied that the persons thus exposed possess the requisite qualifications for the ministry, and that the adverse reasonings which their friends urge against it, have little or no force. College professors and teachers in academies, have also an important duty to perform in such cases. They are often consulted by young men

under their care about their future profession. But whether they are consulted or not, they have frequent opportunities to give them advice on this subject. These opportunities should be embraced, and such counsels given as are adapted to lead them to a right decision. Let them give this advice in view of their fearful responsibility to God, and of the solemn account which they will soon be called to render of their stewardship. We may also remark further that college students who have the ministry in view, may render an important service in this matter by conversing on this subject with their pious fellow students, stating to them the exercises of their own minds, and the leadings of Providence with regard to their seeking this office. God has often made use of this means to turn the attention of students to the ministry, who had not seriously thought of it previously to their being thus addressed.

Even the *postponing* of duty in this particular, beyond what circumstances absolutely require, is sometimes the cause of serious evil. A young gentleman, well known to the writer, graduated at one of our colleges, having in view the gospel ministry. Needing additional funds to enable him to pursue his *theological* studies, he engaged in teaching, not long after which he married, studied law, entered the arena of political preferment, and became a member of the Legislature. Every circumstance seemed to promise a prosperous and brilliant career. By

his marriage he obtained a handsome worldly fortune; and his talents and eloquence would soon have given him a high rank as a statesman. Whether his conscience upbraided him for turning aside from his original purpose, we are not informed. But divine Providence interposed, and by a series of domestic afflictions checked his political aspirations, revived his christian graces, turned his mind again to theological studies, and made him, after ten years' delay, a minister of the gospel.

Cases may occur, in which young men commence a course of classical study for the purpose of preparing for the sacred office, without a divine call. Such persons, upon ascertaining this fact, *ought* to change their purpose, and engage in some other pursuit. But for one, who is conscious of having received a call, to allow himself to be diverted from this object, or even to postpone unduly his preparation for it, must be displeasing to God, and he may expect to be chastised in some form or other for his neglect of duty. Even if he is not conscious himself of neglecting his duty, it may be really so, and his christian brethren may be convinced of it; in which case they are under as sacred an obligation to warn him of the peril he is in, by hesitating to obey the call of God, as they are to admonish the incompetent or unworthy not to run without being sent.

4. There should also be presented to the consideration of pious young men, those scriptural motives which are

adapted to give to their minds a favourable direction toward the sacred office. On one occasion Peter said to his divine Master, "Behold, we have left all, and followed thee. What shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." In this reply, Christ virtually admitted the necessity of forsaking all, in order to become a minister of the gospel. True, the apostles did not possess much; but the little they had they forsook, that they might have no incumbrance in following Christ. They also forsook all prospectively. They abandoned all secular schemes, and gave their undivided attention to the promotion of his cause. They did it, in some instances, against the remonstrances of their nearest relatives; being constrained by their paramount love for Christ, and their regard for his authority and glory. Thus every minister is required to do. Unless he inherits wealth from his parents, or other friends, he must consent to remain poor in this world. The pursuit of earthly treasures is incompatible with the faithful discharge of his official duties. This sentiment should be

distinctly held forth by the proper officers of the Church, when presenting to her sons the subject of a call to the ministry. But they must not stop there—but add the encouraging motive, that, if they obey this call, and faithfully perform the sacred functions belonging to their office, Christ will bestow upon them a richer recompense than silver or gold, houses or lands. The reward here promised relates both to this world and to the next. It is, however, chiefly spiritual in its character, and hence is not designed or adapted to tempt the avarice or ambition of unsanctified men. Leaving out those particulars which were extraordinary and miraculous, which applied to them peculiarly as apostles, and as witnesses of Christ's personal ministry on earth, these invaluable blessings may be hoped for, and expected now, by all true gospel ministers, who fulfil the duties of their high commission with that christian diligence and zeal, and that holy courage and devotion to their work, which characterized the primitive disciples. And are not these incentives sufficient to counterbalance the self-denials required at their hands? If our crosses were a thousand fold greater than they are, they would not be "worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

5. Let it not be forgotten, that the family element is an important one in the Church of Christ, and that christian parents sustain an important relation to the ministry, with regard to their children. They should

dedicate them to the Lord from their birth, and in their daily prayers ask him to renew their hearts, and employ them in his service. But, besides this, they should, by a careful religious training, endeavour to guide their minds in the path of piety and usefulness; and their spiritual overseers should aid them, if necessary, in the discharge of their duty in this particular, especially in such a direction of their thoughts toward the ministry, as will lead them to entertain right views on this subject. Young men and boys often converse familiarly with their parents, and with each other, concerning their plans for future life; and parents should embrace these opportunities to inculcate those great principles of holy living, which are adapted to make them seek the glory of God, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, as their chief and highest aim. We do not say that this course would always result in leading their sons to become ministers. All are not expected to enter the sacred office. This is not God's method of carrying on his work. He makes a division of christian labour according to his pleasure. But if such a course would not make them ministers in all cases, it would prepare them for active usefulness in the Church; and with reference to the ministry, it would remove that indisposition for this work which is often induced by an opposite course of parental training, and be an important step towards qualifying them to become ministers, if the Lord is pleased to call them.

It is a lamentable fact that professedly christian parents too often foster in the minds of their sons a worldly spirit, and teach them to depreciate an office which holds out so few pecuniary inducements. We have been informed by a prominent clergyman of our church, that a young man observed to him that he would be willing to become a minister, provided his father would give his consent. "Will not your father consent to it?" said he. He replied, "I have not asked him, but I have heard him remark that preaching is a poor business." Parents who entertain these views and inculcate them in the minds of their children, ought to consider that, by pursuing this course, they use their influence to dissuade them from a work which, though not lucrative, is more important to mankind than mines of gold and silver; from a work which our divine Lord himself consented to engage in, and with which he has been pleased to connect the salvation of souls. Let them consider, moreover, that they have religiously dedicated their children to God, in the holy ordinance of baptism, and have made in that transaction a solemn promise to do what is practicable to render them "meet for the Master's use." Are they fulfilling their vows, when they discourage their sons from entering the gospel ministry? Nay more, are they fulfilling their vows, when they even *neglect* to teach them those principles, and to cherish within them those feelings which

shall lead their minds to think favourably of this office? The language of their hearts ought to be, Here, Lord, are we, and the children thou hast given us,—take and employ them in any service to which thou shalt be pleased to call them!

If parents and teachers, ministers and churches, should perform their duty in this particular, and take the initiatory step in the matter, instead of waiting for those who deem themselves called to disclose their impressions to the Church, there would be, in our opinion, a large increase in the number of candidates. Much observation and inquiry have convinced us, that many pious and talented young men engage in secular pursuits, who, if such a course as this were pursued by the Church, would devote themselves to the ministry. The various reasons which prevent them from making a tender of their services, would often lose their force, or wholly disappear, if called to this work by the voice of the Church.

A small volume entitled "The Captives of Abb's Valley," published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, contains a thrilling narrative of a little girl, whose family history after her marriage, illustrates the influence of pious parental training, in its relation to the gospel ministry, as well as to a pious and useful life in general. The parents of this girl and some other members of the family were murdered by the Indians, and she, whose

name was Mary Moore, (then nine or ten years of age,) was carried from Abb's Valley, Va., into the State of Ohio, and thence into Canada, remained a captive for several years, and by the noble and perilous exertions of Thomas Evans, whose sister was also taken captive, was rescued from the Indians, together with her brother and Miss Evans, and restored to their friends in Virginia. At the time of her capture by the Indians, when they had gathered everything out of her father's house, and had placed in a pile to be burned, all they did not design to carry away; after they had kindled the fire, she stepped to the place, took up two New Testaments, placed them under her arm, and with them started into her captivity. One of these she retained in every vicissitude, till she was free from all who had injured and oppressed her. Whatever else she may have left or lost, she retained her Testament; and whatever else God may have suffered her to be deprived of, he did not permit his word to be taken from her. When brighter days shone upon her, she could say with the Psalmist, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." . . . . . In October, 1798, Mary Moore was married to the Rev. Samuel Brown, pastor of New Providence church; a man who was regarded by those who best knew him, as the equal of the most distinguished ministers of his day, in the Synod of Virginia. And no one ever thought that he was wedded to one who was his inferior. In her sphere she lived as much respected as he did in his.

"It is now," says the narrative, (1854,) "more than thirty years since Mary Moore closed her eventful life, and left her young family orphans. These years have not passed away without working their changes. The seed that was sown has been springing up, and bringing forth fruit. Without detailing the steps in the progress of events, some of the results will be briefly presented.

"Of the seven sons of the little captive girl, five have entered the ministry in the Presbyterian church, and one has been for several years a ruling elder in the congregation of which his father was the pastor. The youngest son studied medicine, and settled at Russelville, in Tennessee, where he resided until his death in 1851. He was eminent in his profession. It was said of him in the brief obituary notice, "The widow, the orphan, and the poor will long remember him with gratitude." He met death sustained by the same faith which had cheered his mother, and none who were acquainted with him doubt that he has gone to join her in the kingdom of heaven. The third daughter died in early youth, after having given satisfactory evidence that she had made her peace with God. She had lived for some years in Rogersville, Tennessee, with her elder sister Lavinia, the wife of Dr. William A. Walker. Her health never had been vigorous, and she was the first of the family that was called to follow the parents to the land where the weary are at rest. All Mary's grand-

children, who have arrived at the age of mature life, are members of the Presbyterian church; two of her grand-daughters have married Presbyterian ministers, and three of her grandsons are preparing to enter the ministry in the same church.

"The question has been asked sometimes, 'To what are we to attribute this marked and happy result in this family?' Perhaps it never can be satisfactorily answered. The only answer may be, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' But so far as second causes are concerned, there are some considerations which it may not be amiss to mention, as tending to the solution of this question.

"Mr. and Mrs. Brown did not bring up their children for this world. In their whole intercourse with their family, they made it evident to them that their great and ever present concern was that their children should serve God. They did not neglect to attend to their worldly interests, but they were careful to set before them in their daily walk, and in all their conversation, the infinite importance of serving God, and the comparative unimportance of all the wealth and honours of this world. The father once said to one of the beloved elders of his church, in the hearing of his oldest son, then quite a youth, without knowing that the remark was heard by him, 'I have no wish that my children should be wealthy, or rise to places of worldly distinction; but it

is the ever anxious desire of my heart that they shall be pious, and consecrate themselves to God's service, and I daily feel that I can trust him to provide for them.' Several years after the date of this conversation, he had serious thoughts of removing westward, to the region bordering on the Mississippi, and visited that section of the country. After his return, in assigning the reasons that determined his mind not to remove there, he said that he was not willing to bring up his family in a state of morals which existed in that region, and run the risk to which his children would be exposed. These incidents indicate distinctly what his views were. The views of the mother and father perfectly coincided. To the oldest son she once said, when urging on him the claims of God for the affections of his heart, and the service of his life—'Ever since we have had any children, your father and I have often kneeled by your bed when you were asleep, and solemnly dedicated you to God and his service.' This feeling thus expressed by both parents, was carried out in their whole course of action toward their children, and for them; and there can be no doubt that much of the future result is to be attributed to this."

There exists, at this time, a special reason why this method should be resorted to. The common expectation of God's people, founded on scripture prophecy, is, that the millennial glory of the Church is near at hand; and,

as introductory thereto, the Bible teaches us, that the gospel is to be preached to every creature. Of course there is an urgent necessity for increasing very largely, and in the shortest practicable period, the number of ministers, in order to carry into effect this work of preliminary preparation. Christ will hold the Church responsible for the use of appropriate means to accomplish this object, and especially to furnish an adequate supply of well qualified ministers and missionaries, who, in her name, and that of her Divine Head, shall go forth and preach the gospel in all the world, as the harbingers of his glorious reign.

A CALL TO YOUNG MEN.

"Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."—1 Cor. ix. 10.

It is a heavenly theme;
I hear a voice divine—no idle dream—
Calling to duty and to self-denial,
In face of many a stern and bitter trial,
Reverberating when the day is bright,
And whispering in the stillness of the night,
Chiding, when earthly pleasures round me rise;
Soothing, when sorrows fill my weeping eyes.
"Go, preach the gospel, fly to every land;
Obey the risen Saviour's last command."

It comes with accent clear,
Like heavenly music to the listening ear,
With sweetest emphasis of love appealing
To conscious duty and to Christian feeling;
Or comes with trembling accent sad and low,
Like distant echoes from a world of woe,
Of millions perishing through lack of vision,
Chiding my unbelief and indecision.
"Go, preach the gospel, fly to every land;
Obey the risen Saviour's last command."

And I must answer true—
Full many an obstacle will rise in view;
Affection's voice will tempt me to forbear,
And softer labours to my hand prepare.
But no! a bleeding Saviour's love hath found me;
His everlasting arms have sweetly bound me;
I'll gladly follow where he leads the way,
Nor think of danger while I hear him say,
"Go, preach the gospel, fly to every land;
Obey the risen Saviour's last command."

THE

DUTY OF GIVING AWAY

A STATED

PROPORTION OF OUR INCOME.

BY WILLIAM ARTHUR, A.M.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Some changes, not affecting the sense, have been made; such as the reduction of "pounds" to "dollars," and the omission of a few local names and references to books.

THE

DUTY OF GIVING AWAY

A STATED PROPORTION OF OUR INCOME.

I PROPOSE to submit a few observations *on the duty of giving away a stated proportion of our income.* For the practical handling of the subject, I know not that I can do better than attempt to

Explain the duty,

State the grounds whereon it rests, and

Plead for practical attention to it.

When we speak of the duty of giving away a stated proportion of our income, we do not mean *that all persons having equal incomes are bound to give away equal sums, however their other circumstances may vary.* Power to give away may be modified by three circumstances,—family, locality, and station. Of two persons, each receiving a thousand dollars a year, one has seven children, the other is a bachelor. It would be strange if the single man might justly spend upon himself as much as the other must spend on his family, and might inno-

cently give away only as much as he contrives to give. This is a difference of family.

Of two persons having the same family and the same income, one lives in a large city, where rent, taxes, and provisions are high; the other in an agricultural village, where these are all cheap. Is the latter to take the full advantage of his easier circumstances for his private purse, and give none of it to benevolence? This is the difference of locality.

Again, two persons have each five thousand a year. One from small beginnings has reached that point by industry and saving. Without hereditary claims, without public expectations, and with invaluable habits of economy, he is royally rich on his five thousand a year. The other has inherited the same income from a father who was in the habit of spending fifty thousand a year. A number of servants, retainers, and tradespeople have what amounts to a vested interest in his revenue; the public have expectations; and, worst of all, his habits are formed on a costly model, so that he is not only perplexed, but really poor, with his five thousand a year. This is the difference of station.

Each of these three branches of modification has innumerable offshoots, going to show, that to require all who have equal incomes to give away equal sums, would be neither just nor generous.

Nor do we mean that all persons are to give away the same proportion of their income, however its gross amount may vary. Two brothers live in the same town, and have the same family. In this case

station, locality and family are equal. The elder is just able to provide his children with a small house, frugal fare, homely clothing, and a passable education. He is quite unable to lay up anything which would help to open their way in life, when the critical period of settlement shall come. Yet, knowing to whom he and his owe their daily bread, he gratefully devotes a tenth of his income to the service of God.

His younger brother has been otherwise prospered. His children sleep in spacious rooms, and play among their own flower-beds; their clothing is rich, their board generous, and their education costly. For each of them he is able to lay up in store, and knows that, if they do not pass through life with comfort and respect, it will be their own fault. And is this man, for whom Providence has done so much more than for his brother, to content himself with rendering the same proportionate acknowledgment as he? For the latter to give a tenth of all is an effort; an effort which he feels, and his children feel, in "their coats, their hosen, and their hats." For the other to give a tenth would be no effort whatever; it would never affect his comforts, nor even his luxuries, no, not the crumbs that fall from his table. It would affect nothing but his hoarded money. If we hold that his brother should give a tenth, and he should give no more, then we hold that the lesser mercies demand the more touching acknowledgment, and that God's superior bounties may sit more lightly on our hearts.

Take another case: You visit a friend when he is

twenty-five years of age, spending little on his establishment, and giving away a tenth to Him who gives him all. You return to his house when he is fifty. Now he is spending on his establishment ten times as much as before. Why? Because the Lord "hath blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." The same labour which, twenty-five years ago, yielded him a modest income, now brings a twentyfold return. When Providence has thus multiplied the proportionate productiveness of his soil, is he to confine his acknowledgments to the same proportion which he rendered when his efforts were far less fruitful? If he does, gratitude diminishes as bounties enlarge. We would, therefore, strongly contend that when Providence greatly increases the return of labour, or throws abundance into our lap without labour, we are bound to acknowledge such mercy—mercy which distinguishes us above the ordinary lot of men—not by thank-offerings adjusted to the scale of those whose blessing is less than ours, but by aiming to keep pace with the peculiar bounty which, while some pine and others struggle, gives us "all things richly to enjoy." One man's tenth is more than another man's third. I know one venerable man—one of the men whom my soul loveth—who, at the outset of life, adopted the vow of Jacob, "Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to Thee;" but so far from confining himself to this, I know that some years ago, he was for that year giving away not a tenth, but four tenths. How Providence has dealt with him you may judge from the simple fact, that on

one day he might be seen in the morning giving away a thousand dollars to one religious society, and in the evening five hundred to another.

On the other hand, we do not mean that persons are bound to give away all their income, so as to admit of no increase of capital, or extension of property. There is a large class of promises which attach temporal advancement to humble and godly industry, as a reward from Providence. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life." (Prov. xxii. 4.) "Such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth." (Psalm xxxvii. 22.) "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in His commandments. Wealth and riches shall be in his house." (Psalm cxii. 1, 3.) Liberality itself, the very virtue for which we are pleading, is encouraged by the prospect of abundance. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Prov. iii. 9.) One of the punishments threatened against improperly gotten wealth is its decrease, while lawful labour is stimulated by the hope of plenty. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labour shall increase."

This passage not only offers to industry the prize of increase, but states the true relation of labour and capital. "He that gathereth by labour shall increase." Labour creates capital; capital rewards labour. Where there is no labour, capital is lumber; where there is no capital, labour is beating the air.

The effect of well-directed labour is to increase capital; the effect of increasing capital is to lighten the burden and raise the pay of labour. These effects depend not on the will of men or masters, but are wrought deeper than either can permanently reach, into the groundwork of human relations, by the Builder of all. That accumulation of capital which results from the blessing of Providence on lawful industry, so far from contravening the purposes of benevolence, directly and most efficiently serves them. Two brothers enter this city, each with a capital of $100,000. The one seeks out twenty thousand poor families in the city and country, and gives away all his capital among them, five dollars to each. The other invests his hundred thousand in a factory. Return in five years, and mark the effect of the two sums upon the people. Of the first hundred, the only trace you can find is here a decayed bonnet, there a worn-out cloak, and in some humble homes a very grateful recollection; but no permanent public benefit, no sensible improvement in the condition of the labouring poor. As to the other, it fed and clothed many families from the first day; to-day it is feeding and clothing many families, and it is promising to do so in perpetuity. At the same time, the profits which are known to have accrued to its owner, are attracting other capital to a like investment, so as further to improve the prospects of all the labouring population of the neighbourhood.

It is possible, and more than possible, that in this case the one who gave away his all, did it from the

noble motive of self-denial; and most assuredly he will have his reward. It is also possible that the other acted from the commonest selfishness, and can look for no credit beyond that of worldly wisdom. But the fact, that he who acted from a noble motive did no permanent good to the poor, while he who acted from a low one did much, forces us to inquire, Did not the one unconsciously violate, and the other unconsciously follow, a law of Providence? Does not the one case indicate the existence of a law against the dispersion of property in indiscriminate gifts, and the other a law in favour of its employment to elicit and reward useful labour? Land and money are the two bases of wealth. Cultivation is to the one what commercial investment is to the other. Religion does not require that either should be made away with, or neglected; but that, when laid out for increase, the Lord should be honoured with the first-fruits of all the increase.

But here many sincere and admirable Christians will tell me, "You are arguing directly against the words of our Lord. He commands us, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;' and to do as you say, is plainly to break this very clear command." If that be so, all my reasoning on the point falls to the ground; and he who permits riches to increase is no Christian. But is it so?

We have already seen that a class of promises exist which must be nullified, if no servant of God is to permit his possessions to increase; and such commands as, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men;" "Charge them that are rich.....that

they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate," &c., enforce duties which exist not, if no man has a right to have possessions, except only in such a degree as will enable him to continue alive. No command ever contradicts another command; and no command is ever meant to supersede a whole class of promises. With these two principles in view, we take this command, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and place it beside another which is like unto it: "Take no thought for to-morrow." Am I to be told that I break this latter command, if I take thought for duties and responsibilities which do not press to-day, but will to-morrow? Without doing so, I cannot fulfil my duty to God, to my neighbour, or to myself. The highest obligations which are laid upon me, require thought, and action, too, for the morrow. This runs through all the ways of Providence. Most of the duties for which he holds us responsible, call us to work for the morrow. For to-morrow the plougher ploughs, for to-morrow the sower sows, for to-morrow the reaper reaps, for to-morrow the miller grinds, for to-morrow the weaver plies his loom, for to-morrow the builder frames his roof; and did we put a stop to all labour which is for to-morrow, we should at once reduce the activity of the human race to a few of the most menial occupations. The call to take no thought for to-morrow, is certainly not a call to neglect duties, and evade responsibilities; but a call to trust in Providence when the time only to trust has come. When I have done for to-morrow all that is laid at my door, then let me not encroach

upon the province of Him who alone can rule the future and the contingent, by troubling myself with them. Let me simply do this day the work which is this day due; and though long and impenetrable months may lie between me and its result, for that I must trust Him whom the sparrows trust; saying cheerfully, "The Lord will provide!"

When in the one of these two glorious words of Christ the letter is so plainly to be interpreted by the spirit of all Scripture, it is not probable that in the other the letter is all we are to look to. But if you will appeal to the letter, then to the letter you shall go. That letter is, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, *where moth and rust do corrupt.*" Now moth and rust do not corrupt property employed in active service, as commercial investment. They only corrupt hoards which are heaped up idle, not doing the purposes of Providence, not contributing to the welfare of men. Against such stores only does the letter of this precept bear, and against them let all denunciations peal!

But though we do not believe that the letter of our Lord's precept was ever meant to prevent His servants from accepting such increase of their goods as His bounty might give them, while they glorified Him with their first-fruits; we deeply feel that in the spirit of that precept many weighty lessons lie. It seems to say, "*Do not resolve to be rich.*" To you, young man, it seems clearly to say, "Do not make up your mind to die worth thirty thousand or a hundred thousand dollars." Any such resolution is evil, and out of it woes will come. "They that

will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) It also says,

Do not make haste to be rich; even without formally resolving to win a high prize of wealth, do not follow after riches eagerly, or long to see yourself enriched with abundance. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall *not be innocent*..... He that hasteth to be rich hath *an evil eye*, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him." (Prov. xxviii. 20, 22.)

Do not adopt selfishness as a means of wealth. Our natural reason and the carnal mind prompt us to say, "If I am to be rich, all that I get I must keep. Holding, nursing, guarding all that comes into my hands, it must grow to be of some account at last." Such a mode of calculating is confronted by the spirit of faith and love which breathes all through the Bible. Viewing a Power infinitely above the petty advantages of hoarding, it cries, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Take this proverb to your heart. There is joy and glory in it. It links your hope of personal comfort with the Father of all benevolence. Say, "If there is wealth to be gotten by greed, by holding, by shutting my heart against gushes of generosity, and my hand against self-forgetting acts of goodness, then such wealth be to others, and its fruits be far from my children!" Say, "Wealth so gotten is no wealth: it is but a metal coffin for the affec-

tions. If wealth come to me, let it come from the Great Giver, at whose bidding I cast my bread upon the waters!" "The blessing of the Lord *it* maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."

Do not trust in riches. In the forms of popular speech, we may often trace real and important distinctions. Nothing is more common than to hear persons speak of a man idolizing various objects of earthly affection. Yet of many such objects we never hear it said they are made gods. We often hear of a man making an idol of his child; but people do not say he makes a god of his child. With regard to money, however, it is quite otherwise; they readily say, "He makes a god of his money." Yes; for he not only loves the money and doats on it, but he puts his trust in it. All the faith he has centres in it. It is his Providence; on it his future depends; it is his hope for his children; his hope of name and honour after death. Assail it, and you assail his rock, his strong tower, his reward. Take it away, and in his own feeling you have bereft him of *all his dependence.* Surely this is idolatry! "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, *nor trust in uncertain riches*, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. vi. 17–19.)

These seem to me to be some of the chief lessons taught us in this precept of our blessed Master; and

he who cordially follows these, glorifying God, and benefiting man with liberal first-fruits of all his increase—on him, for my part, riches and plenty may freely come. In his progress all good men will rejoice; the poor will bless his riches. If, like Abraham, he has an old servant, he will say, with smiles, "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he has become great: and He hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses." (Gen. xxiv. 35.)

We do not mean that Christians are bound to draw a line, and say, "Beyond this limit, no matter what the bounties of Providence may be, my possessions shall never go." O, what a blessing it had been to thousands had they adopted such a resolution! Many who prospered up to a point which they would have once thought affluence, not then content, pressed forward, and by a few errors dispersed the gatherings of a lifetime. Many for years employed their growing wealth to do good; but at length they had outgrown their religious strength, and, like a youth failing under his own stature, their virtues died of decline. Happy would it be for many, did they set a limit to their aims, and add nothing beyond! Whenever this is done in the spirit of humble faith, surely it is good and acceptable to God. But I cannot undertake to teach that it is laid down in Scripture as an incumbent duty.

Away on the very horizon of sacred history, in the glory of its dawn, we see—shall I say, a group?—three personages; the first, shrouded with that excel-

ling light which no man can approach unto; the second, dark with that darkness which, thank God, neither our words nor our imagination can picture; the third, a man of like passions with ourselves. To this man the Maker of all points the tempter of all, and says, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" And who is this of whom we have such testimony as never was borne to other man—who is held up to the accuser of saints, as a triumphant instance of the redeeming power of grace? He is one whose wealth is almost countless, who has distanced every contemporary, and is the greatest of all the men of the East. It is plain that his immense possessions were no stain upon his "record" which was "on high." But ere you exult, in the belief that you may innocently accumulate to an indefinite amount, carefully mark how he employed his wealth.

While his children were holding family feasts, and the joy of abundance was in all their homes, he was "continually" rising early, going to the altar of God, and offering up offerings in large number. And how did he live among his neighbors, while thus honouring his God? "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.....I was eyes to the blind,

and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out." (Job xxix. 11, &c.)

Go thou and do likewise. Thus continually and liberally offer unto God; thus bountifully and actively distribute to man; and so long as we see you so doing, "may your garners be full, affording all manner of store!" I, at least, will cheerfully leave it to Providence to fix the limit of your increase. But one word: as you proceed upwards, one earnest word: Walk warily on those heights! Heads are often turned up there; and fearful gulfs yawn under you if you fall!

While, however, we do not contend that to let "riches increase" is forbidden, or even that to permit that increase to an indefinite amount is contrary to clear Scripture, we do contend:—

That not to give away any part of our income is unlawful:

That to leave what we shall give to be determined by impulse or chance, without any principle to guide us, is unlawful:

That to fix a principle for our guidance, by our own disposition, or by prevalent usage, without seeking light in the word of God, is unlawful:

That when we search the Scriptures for a principle, the very lowest proportion of our income for which we can find any show of justification, is a tenth of the whole:

That, therefore, it is our duty to give away statedly, for the service and honour of our God, at the very

least one-tenth of all which He commits to our stewardship.

These are my views as to the duty for which I am now pleading; and are, I presume, however shades and points may vary, in substance the views of the gentlemen by whose call I stand here.

As to the grounds on which this duty rests Let us suppose that it does not rest on any grounds whatever; that the idea of such a duty is without foundation; that we are each at liberty to choose what proportion of his possessions he shall give away, from the nearest approach to nothing upwards; so that if one give a tenth, another a nineteenth, and a third one thousandth part, they differ not in this—that one is liberal, the other covetous, and the third a wretch; but in this—that the one is liberal, the other less liberal, and the other less so still; each of them practising a virtue, a voluntary virtue, only in various degrees. This a plain meaning and practical application of a notion which floats in undefined thought, and is often expressed in vague language, by many excellent people,—a notion about Christianity leaving the amount of liberality to the private will and disposition of each individual.

If this view be correct, then it follows that in Christian morals we have *one virtue which has no* minimum *limit*, no expiring point; which continues to be a virtue down to within a hairbreadth of nothing, no matter how largely mixed with the opposite vice. Shall we apply this principle to the other virtues? for instance, Truth? Are we not apt

to think that, however much truth may be in a statement, if mixed with a little deception, the virtue of it is gone? And as to honesty, Do we not feel that whatever amount of honesty may be in a transaction, if mixed with any cheating, the virtue is destroyed? And are we to hold that any miserable gift, somewhat short of nothing, which a covetous man may give, is yet an act of liberality, though in a low degree? Is liberality the one virtue which Christianity has abandoned, in this cold world, to every man's whim, and never pronounces violated, so long as it is not totally renounced and abjured? Surely there is some point far short of nothing, at which gifts cease to be "liberal," and begin to be "vile;" at which a giver ceases to be "bountiful," and deserves to be called a "churl!"

One thing is certain, that if Christianity has set no *minimum* limit to generosity, it *has set a* maximum limit. If we are at liberty to press down our generosity to the lowest discernible point, we are not at liberty to push it up without check. Christianity commands plainly, "Owe no man anything;" so that I cannot give away money while I am unable to pay my debts, without violating the laws of my religion. She also plainly declares that if any man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an "infidel." Therefore I cannot give away money while my own are unprovided for, or left to be provided for by others, without violating the laws of my religion. Is it, then, probable that Christ's good Gospel, while marking points in the upward progress of

generosity at which it would pass into injustice, has marked none in its downward progress at which it would pass into selfishness?

If Christianity has left benevolence entirely to private decision, it also follows *that, while those branches of expenditure which regard our self-interest are regulated by fixed circumstances, that which is for the glory of God is at the mercy of chance.* The three circumstances already named—family, locality, station—decide for each of us, to a great extent, the scale of most items of our outlay. Your rent is tolerably well fixed from year to year, your board is not very uncertain, your dress, and every other claim of self-interest, has its proportion not ill defined; and is it probable that while every outlay that nourishes self is regular, that only outlay which tends to free you from earth, and connect your hopes with a better country, is precisely the one which the religion of Jesus has left to be the football of passion or of accident?

"I do not mean," you say, "that we are at liberty to give by mere chance, without fixing some principle; I only mean, we are not bound to a tenth." Not bound to a tenth! No, most surely we are not bound to a tenth. If that be your meaning, then thy heart is as my heart. No principle of the Gospel, no precept of the law, ever glances in the direction of binding us to a tenth. But is it possible that you mean something which you do not say? Is it possible that when you speak of not being bound to a tenth, you mean we are at liberty to make up our minds not to give a tenth, but to give something

less? Well, so let it be. Suppose that a Christian, without offending against his religion, may spend on self-interests more than nine-tenths of his income; then it follows that *It is lawful for a Christian to be more selfish than was lawful for a Jew.* This conclusion may not be agreeable; but it is clear. Every Jew was blessed with a religion which checked his downward, earthward tendency, at the *very least* to this extent—that, of his all, one tenth went to sacred things, and thus connected with them his affections and his hopes. Less than that he could not consecrate to the service of his God, without a trespass against his religion. If, then, a Christian may give less, his religion elevates him in a lower degree, leaves him to be more earthly without guilt, and less noble without reproach.

One other consequence follows. If a Christian may, according to his religion, lawfully devote less than a tenth of his income to holy purposes, then CHRISTIANITY HAS LOWERED THE STANDARD OF A VIRTUE, and that the virtue of liberality! The Jew who gave less than one tenth was branded by his religion a sinner. That system, which we regard as so much more earthly, so much less spiritual and heavenly, than ours, ever held the standard of pecuniary self-denial up to that point, at the very least. And is it come to this, that our Christianity, our religion of love and sacrifice, let down the standard of this special virtue below the point where it stood when she came to warm our world? We know the thousand contrivances to escape from this conclusion. But, however often you cite the difference be-

tween an agricultural and a commercial people; however much you talk of Levites, tribes, rent-charges, and adjustments; however many lanes you enter from your starting-point, if you follow any one of them to its end, it will land you in front of this conclusion: CHRISTIANITY HAS LOWERED THE STANDARD OF A VIRTUE.

But I will not further follow the supposition that the duty of giving away at least a tenth of our income has no grounds; for the conclusions to which it leads are not satisfactory. I will now assert that it has grounds. They may be thus stated:—

GIVING IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. This position needs no special argument. In support of it the whole New Testament cries aloud. The system of redemption is, from first to last, one prodigious process of gift. God loved the world, and GAVE His only-begotten Son. The Son loved us, and GAVE Himself to death for us all. This giving does not rest at the point of bounty, but passes on to that of inconceivable sacrifice. Every man on whose spirit the true light of redemption breaks, finds himself heir to a heritage of givings, which began on the eve of time, and will keep pace with the course of eternity. To giving he owes his all; in giving he sees the most substantial evidence he can offer, that he is a grateful debtor; and the self-sacrifice of Him in whom he trusts says, far more pathetically than words could say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It is ordained by Christianity that giving shall be

both bountiful and cheerful. It does not satisfy the demands of our religion that we give; we must give much. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." This refers to the *amount* of gifts; but having decided that the amount must be unsparing, Christianity is not even then content; that unsparing amount must be given with a cheerful heart, "not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." One of the oddest things in all argument is, that this passage is sometimes resorted to as cover by those who claim liberty to give away as little as ever they please. Let them turn to the passage (2 Cor. ix. 5–7), and they will see that it is not left to them or to any man to decide whether giving shall be on a bountiful or a sparing scale. That it is not to be sparing, and is to be bountiful, is settled; and then a cheerful heart is commanded in addition. The twofold requirement is a gift not *sparing* as to amount, nor *grudging* as to feeling. One may cheerfully give a sparing gift who would grudge a bountiful one; and one who, from "necessity," from pressure, or shame, gives a large gift, may grudge while he gives. Do not spare when you give, and do not grudge when you make sacrifices! This is the voice of a passage which some would fain use to cloak their unwillingness to make liberality a regulated and well-considered virtue.

A sparing, a bountiful, and a grudging giver may all be met with in your every day life. You call on a wealthy gentleman, Mr. Close, for a benevolent object. "Yes; it is a good cause, every one ought to do his share; but really one has so much

to do, one is always giving. However, I have great pleasure in giving my mite; you are perfectly welcome, Gentlemen, to this trifle:" and he gives you five dollars. You modestly hesitate, tell him that much will depend on his example, and that, from his position, you had hoped for something considerable, say five hundred dollars. "O dear no! I could never afford that. That is a subscription for a rich man. I am very happy to give my mite; but I never thought of any sum like that."

From this sparing, but cheerful giver you pass to another, Mr. Goode. He just hears you, and, puts down his name for a thousand dollars. This is neither sparing nor grudging.

From him you go to Mr. Sharpe. He hears your statement. "O yes! all the principal people are giving to it. One must do something respectable. Will you let me see your book, gentlemen?—What! Goode down for a thousand dollars! I know why he did that. It was to be ahead of me, or rather to spite me; for he knew I would never be behind him. It is not the first time he has served me so; but I'm not going to let him stand before me for the sake of five hundred dollars." And so he puts down a thousand.

Now, while this gift professes to be an act done out of consideration for others, it is really done out of consideration for himself; and, while his hand was giving, his heart was grudging.

The greedy man who would grudge a large gift, but makes a merit of a small one; and the vain man who must stand high, even in giving, and grudges

the price he pays for his importance, are equally far from Christianity. A bounty that reaches the point of sacrifice, and a heart-charity that rejoices in such sacrifice, can alone meet the call of the Gospel.

It is ordained by Christianity, that our bountiful and cheerful giving shall be in proportion to our means. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, *as God hath prospered him.*" Here the scale which regulates giving is decisively taken from the hand of impulse, fashion, or personal disposition. Whether our giving is or is not to be in proportion to the bounties of God to us, is no matter of debate. The principle of proportion is enjoined in the New Testament. But the passage decides nothing as to what application of the law of proportion is to be made. One who gives a hundredth part of his increase, observes a proportion as much as one who gives a fifth; and might plead that he was giving as God had prospered him, if he could find ground in Scripture for the belief that one hundredth would be acceptable.

This scripture, "As God hath prospered him," forces us to ask, What *is* giving in proportion to God's gifts to us? If we seek an answer in the New Testament, everything seems to push up the scale to a proportion from which we nearly all shrink away. We find liberality in a rich man sanctioned up to "half his goods," as in the case of Zaccheus; and in a poor widow up to "all her living," as with the two mites. We find a whole church selling their property, and giving away without limit; and though that example is never enforced on others, it

is never reproved. We find the church of Macedonia, in "depths of poverty," and also in "a great trial of afflictions," abounding in "riches of liberality;" and their record is written for the gratitude of all ages, that they gave "beyond their power." These early Christians, who thus rejoiced to bestow, are melted to yet greater sacrifices by words so winning and so mighty as, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was *rich*, yet for your sakes He became *poor*, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Turn where you will in the New Testament in search of an answer to the question, "What is giving as God has prospered me?" you are surrounded by an atmosphere of fervid joy and love; solicited by a feeling of which the words are, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men;" and the deeds are every good work, distributing, communicating, making sacrifices with which God is well pleased: you are stimulated by examples of Apostles forsaking all, individuals selling all, churches bestowing all, the deeply poor giving to the poorer, and, to crown the whole, the MASTER giving always, and storing never; and in the end giving Himself a ransom for all. You feel that if you are to take your answer to the question by honest, logical inference from that Book, any thought of a tenth is out of sight, and you must contemplate a style of giving which no one I know—perhaps I do know some of the poor who would—but which no one of the comfortable classes, in our day, would think of following.

If, fearful to press New-Testament precept and example, we go to the Old to learn what the Lord counted acceptable in ancient times, we find that each head of a family among the Jews was bound by direct enactment to give a tenth of all his yearly increase to the support of the ministering tribe of Levi. He had to pay a second tenth for the support of the feasts; a third tenth for the poor once in three years; and in addition were the trespass offerings, long and costly journeys to the temple, and sundry other religious charges, all imposed by Divine sanction; besides free-will offerings. Taking all these items, it is undoubted that among the Jews *every head of a family was under religious obligation to give away at least a fifth, perhaps a third, of his yearly income.*

Passing on to the Patriarchs, you find Jacob, when houseless, awaking from his sleep by the roadside, solemnly vowing to the God of his fathers, that if only "bread to eat and raiment to put on" were granted to him in his exile, a tenth of all should be rendered back in honour of his God. And further up, where you see Abraham, the father and representative of all believers, standing before Melchizedek, the type, not of the Levitical priesthood, but of our Great High Priest, he gives him a tenth of all. The goods were the property of others, of which he would not, for his private benefit, take "from a thread to a shoe-latchet;" but yet he asserted the claims of the Lord upon all.

Thus, in the patriarchal dispensation, a tenth seems to be the portion which the Lord accepts.

In the Mosaic dispensation, that proportion is raised to at least a fifth by express ordinances; and when we come into the Gospel dispensation, we are sensible at once of a notable rise in the temperature of benevolence. Here the idea of a religion less generous, less self-denying, less superior to sordid hoards or personal comforts, is not only inadmissible, but atrocious. Whatever of heavenliness and large heart was in the religion of Prophets, receives an expansion and not a chill, and selfish man is placed at last in his highest school of unselfishness.

Whether, then, we take the Old Testament or the New, the lowest proportion of giving for which we can find any pretext, or foot-hold whatever, in command or in precedent, is one tenth. He who fixes on this, deliberately fixes on far less than was required of a Jew. He who fixes on less than this, deliberately excludes all Scripture instruction, and chooses a standard for which no part of God's word offers a justification.

But several objections are taken against our conclusion; some of which we ought to notice.

"*In urging upon us to give away a tenth, you are reviving the Levitical law, and that is abolished.*" The difference between those who hold that it stands, and those who hold that it is abolished, lies perhaps more in word than reality. Those who hold that it stands, would hardly contend that the letter is in force; for that was, that the tenth should be given to the tribe of Levi, which, to the letter, we cannot fulfil. And those who hold that it is abolished,

surely do not mean that its spirit is abolished. The spirit of that law is, "Of Thine own have we given unto Thee." This is not abolished; and, blessed be God, never will be! And surely you do not mean that this spirit, a spirit so right and good, in passing from Judaism to Christianity, forsook a more sensitive body, for one grosser and heavier with earth! We need not pause to show that, quite independently of the Levitical tenth, the other requirements of the Mosaic law demand more than a second tenth; and that the Patriarchs gave their tenth before ever Levi was.

"*But we are not now to be brought under rule; for the law is love.*" I know that some who thus speak, do so upon the best grounds. A good man has a small income and a large family; he has also a warm heart, and his neighbours know it. Though he never adopted any specific proportion, he is conscious, and so is his wife, by daily experience, that he gives away "to his power, yea, and beyond his power." When he hears of fixing a rule, and walking by it, he feels that for him it is unnecessary; and he pleads, "*The law is love.*" Were all like him, most gladly should we leave it here. But many whose heart has never led them into the troubles of over-giving, gladly catch up his words, and, as a simple defence against giving something definite, cry, "*The law is love.*"

To you who use this objection we have only one thing to say: If the law is love, will you keep the law? Then all we contend for, and more than all, is secured. Among laws, none is near so exacting as

love. It has never felt, never done, never given enough. It is "never ending, still beginning." Its great things of yesterday, are little things to-day; and its great things to-day, will be little things to-morrow. *The law of love!* It is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and thy neighbour *as thyself*." And you invoke the law of love to save your money!

As a matter for personal guidance, the definite meaning of this expression is something like this: "The heart that is right is full of love. Love fulfils all law, and secures the rights of God and man. Therefore the heart that is right is a law to itself, and needs no other rule. But my heart is right, and is sure to fulfil the law without special rules." Is that safe reasoning? If your heart be so right to-day, may it not wax cold some other day? and would it not be well to have a test by which to try its warmth? Or may there not be some like me, who cannot trust so surely to their heart; but feel that it is a wholesome thing, to have clear rules whereby its dispositions may be often measured?

Love may be a good reason for going above rules; but it is the worst in the world for staying below them, or without them. It is a law of love which binds a man to provide for the comfort of his family; but surely that is no reason why he should refuse to give his wife a regular allowance for the expenses of housekeeping.

"*But you speak of giving a tenth:—that is an arithmetical law; and you will never bring the hearts of Christians under a cold arithmetical law.*"

This is a very tremendous objection. Half the sympathies of an audience are in danger of being lost the moment they hear that our rule is a cold arithmetical law. Arithmetic sounds of school-books, and counting-houses, and markets, and hard problems, and dry statistics, and other ungenerous things. Well, it is so, and we cannot deny it; to say you are bound to give away at the very least a tenth of your all, is to speak the language of arithmetic. But is the principle the less sacred for that? "Remember the *seventh* day to keep it holy." That is an arithmetical expression! And is there any thing unhallowed in the Sabbath because a square seventh is cut off from our time, and is just in that arithmetical proportion to be consecrated to God? Again: it is ordained that a Bishop shall be the husband of but *one* wife, which is an arithmetical law.

But if our spacious friends who object to narrow arithmetical laws will observe their own givings, it will prove that somehow arithmetic follows them wherever they go. For if you do not give a tenth, but a ninetieth, even that is an arithmetical proportion; and if, instead of giving a tenth all the year through, you only give a tenth of one day's income for the whole year, still that is an arithmetical proportion,—though it might be hard to ascertain it: and, in fact, go down however low you may, if you give any thing whatever, at any time whatever, it still bears an arithmetical proportion to the whole. Did we name a tenth as the high standard of Christian benevolence, and confine ourselves to it, we

might be taunted with arithmetic; but when we name it only as the lowest point at which any footing can be found, and leave all above free, that arrow flies below us.

"*But if you teach men to give a tenth, they will give that and be content, though they ought to be giving much more.*" This is an objection of real gravity. Doubtless, did we succeed in producing generally in the churches the state of feeling, that all were bound to give at least a tenth, many would think themselves generous in giving that, when perhaps a third or a half would be only their just proportion. But how do matters stand at present? Multitudes of sincere Christians are royally content, though they give nothing like a tenth; and could we succeed in bringing up the church generally to that proportion, (though far below what we hold to be the due of many,) the state of things then would present a wonderful improvement on that existing now.

But I question whether adopting the principle of proportion would tend to make men content with the *minimum* proportion, after they were abundantly prospered. So far as my knowledge of its practical working goes, my impression is the reverse. It is my pleasure to know many men who, at the outset of life, or early in life, adopted Jacob's resolution to give a tenth. These have all been prosperous men. I do not know one of them but shows that the effect of his early adopting the principle of a tenth, has been to prepare him for a higher proportion when years of plenty set in.

And is it not natural that such should be the effect? There is a great, not to say a tremendous, power over man in that very principle of arithmetical proportion which it is so easy to spurn. When an arbitrary proportion of our time or goods is taken,—a proportion for which reason has no more to say than for any other,—what is the effect upon the mind? It serves as a practical claim of sovereignty on the part of the Creator. It says, "This is claimed, because all might be claimed. He who accepts this, owns all, and holds you to account for the rest." It is not probable that year after year one will carefully set apart a fixed proportion for the service of his God, without becoming habituated to feel that he is neither author nor owner of any fraction of property, but merely steward; and that He at whose feet he lays the first-fruits is the Lord, the Giver of all. Such stated setting apart is a practical keeping of the precept: "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." And whoever thus begins life by keeping a law of proportion, is the most likely of all men to advance his proportion, as his Benefactor augments his blessing.

"*But we ought not to speak of a tenth, a fifth, or any other proportion; our duty as Christians is to give all.*" That is not correct. Our duty is not to give away all; but to employ all according to the will of God, and so as to be pleasing in His sight. It is our positive duty not to give away all; but to spend suitable proportions of our income in supplying our own wants, and those of our families, as

also in fulfilling any commercial or other calling for which property is needful. Our objector replies, "Of course, what I meant was, all *after our reasonable wants are supplied.* We ought to give absolutely all the surplus, and not save any."

In the lips of some—and I could name the very man—this means noble and incessant liberality; but in the lips of most, it would just mean giving as much as was perfectly convenient. If every one, before assigning any portion as a thank-offering to the Giver of all, is to spend what meets his views of providing for his own and his children's wants, present and prospective, in ninety-nine out of every hundred cases it will prove that the surplus for giving away is next to nothing. In many cases, giving liberally will be postponed till family provision is made, till resources are fairly in advance of demands; and by that time *all heart for giving will be gone.* In fact, this rule of giving away all you have to spare, is that by which multitudes think they are living; whereas, could they get an account of all they gave on this system last year, and resolve next year to consecrate the small proportion of a tenth, they would be utterly astonished to find how much the latter exceeds their habitual liberality.

One strong reason for some definite rule lies in this: That we have far better memories for our virtues, than for our obligations—for the dollars we give away, than for those we receive, or spend upon ourselves. Even truly excellent persons, who have not *tested* their givings, monstrously exaggerate the amount of them to their own mind. The relish of

one act of liberality remains long upon the lips; and some who believe that "their hand is never out of their pocket," would be confounded if the great account where all items are entered were placed before them, and they saw how miserably little their endless deeds of generosity amount to. The first expenditure of all should be that which sanctifies the rest—that which is not for self, or flesh, or earth, or time, but for the Lord, for gratitude, for the training of the soul, for store in heaven. Our own morsel will be sweeter, and more wholesome too, when the due acknowledgment has been first laid, with a bountiful hand and a thankful heart, on the altar of the Saviour. "Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, *until* the selfsame day that *ye have brought* an offering unto your God." (Lev. xxiii. 14.) This was the spirit of the first-fruits—a spirit of noble preference for the honour of God over selfish care.

Another advantage of deciding that a consecrated proportion shall take the precedence of all other outlay, instead of counting on giving what we have to spare, is this: It materially affects our scale of personal expenditure. Our ideas of what is necessary are ruled by our knowledge of what we have to spend. A gentleman with five thousand a year, who means to give away what he can spare, unless he be a man of extraordinary generosity and decision united (which cases are never the rule), forms his whole scheme of expenditure on the basis of five thousand a year, and finds it hard, now and then, to spare a dollar or two; not that he is unwilling, but

all his resources are pre-engaged. Another with the same income has his regular BENEVOLENT FUND, into which the first fifth of his income goes. The effect is, that all his plans of expenditure proceed on the basis of four thousand a year; and thus while the Benevolent Fund is strong for all legitimate claims, it pays itself—perhaps more than pays itself—by acting as a check upon the Vanity Fund, the Hobby Fund, the Folly Fund, and several other exigent funds on which thousands of our domestic revenues are wasted. We, then, hesitate not for a moment to prefer the rule of giving regular first-fruits, even in the low proportion of a tenth, over the rule of giving *all* we have to spare. This last, while for a strong and holy man the highest of laws, is for the great majority a law which amounts to no more than is now prevalent.

"*But, at all events, surely you would not apply your rule to the poor.*" Certainly not to the destitute. One object of liberality is to relieve and comfort them. But rising above those who need help, upon whom do you fix as poor? The man who can afford to spend money on liquors or segars, is he poor? The woman who can afford to spend money on fineries, is she poor? It would be no small blessing, if some of those well-meaning but ill-judging persons who are continually telling the poor that they are too poor to do any good, or support any cause, would stand out of the way of the poor. The worst thing you can do for a man, is to pauperize him. If a poor man reads this—and I hope many will—I would say to him, Never count that man

your friend who teaches you to lean on other people. He is your friend, and your children's friend, who teaches you to lean alone on the good providence of God, and on your own right hand.

On the very same grounds that it is a serious injury to a man to pauperize him, it is a great service to teach him to save something, and give it away. The one induces feebleness, the other power: the one inclines him to be listless in earning, and thriftless in spending; the other to be alert in earning, and careful in spending. The moment a man begins to save something and give it away, he rises in the social scale, and takes his place in the family circle of benefactors. As to the godly poor, I will test this whole question of proportionate giving by their verdict, sooner than by that of any other class. Let some of those who would bid us not ask them to give, learn what they do, and, perhaps, they will look anew to their own proportions. And when one sees how the poor tax themselves by waste, by hurtful luxuries, by ill-spent time, how often their spare money, not pre-engaged for good ends, is the cause of their ruin, one feels indignant at those self-constituted friends of theirs who would protect them from the calls of generosity—the very calls which would raise and make men of them; and we say, Stand out of the way of the poor!

There was One who was no amateur in poverty, but had known it from the manger, in His own lot and that of His friends. Did He think it a pity that the widow should give away her two mites? or did He tell Mary that the exceedingly costly box

of ointment was too much for one of her means? And when the Prophet heard from the widow of whom he had begged a little bread, that she was so poor as to say, "I have not a cake," did he think it would be a loss to her to give, for the Lord's sake, a little of her meal? He who delights in mercy has never yet denied to the poor the joy of giving. St. Paul plainly contemplates giving as the immediate result of labour in the case of one recovered from the class of thieves. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing that is good, *that he may have to give to him that needeth.*" (Eph. iv. 28.) If, then, a reformed thief, just beginning to earn his own bread, is at once to set before him the joy of giving away a share of his earnings, who dare degrade the working men of Christendom, by telling them they are to look on themselves as meant only to feed their own wants? O what a blessing had it been to many a poor working man, what a saving to his means, what a comfort to his home, had his father trained him to honour the Lord with the first-fruits of all his increase!

"*But there are those whom we do not call the poor, who yet are in more straits than they—persons of small means and respectable position.*" I should be the last man on earth to press hard on that class. There are no sorrows I would hold more sacred than theirs, who unite in themselves the feelings of the rich and the fortunes of the poor. Poverty is a cold wind; and the higher your situation, the colder it blows. But this is to be said: However sacred may

be the claims of respectability, of the desire to honour your family, and maintain your appearances, more sacred still are the claims of gratitude, piety, and goodness. Nor will it ever prove that what you painfully spare from your own respectability for the purpose of honouring your God, will fail to bring back its reward. "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

These are the chief objections to our argument; and having thus noticed them, I now proceed to—

PLEAD FOR PRACTICAL ATTENTION TO THE DUTY.

By "practical attention to" it, I do not mean that we should be much interested in the subject, feel ourselves in a very generous frame, and intend to be much more liberal than we have been; then comfortably come round, in the course of a week or two, to our old habits. By "practical attention to" it, I mean something different from all this,—something decided, something instant, something permanent and life-long. I mean that every one, in solemn gratitude to God, and under an humble sense that He is owner and they are stewards, should now, and irrevocably resolve that by the help of Divine grace, henceforth to the day when money ceases to be treasure, "OF ALL THAT THOU SHALT GIVE ME, I WILL SURELY GIVE THE TENTH TO THEE."

This resolve once come to, it only remains that, at stated times, the consecrated portion of what the Lord gives you be set apart for His service; and that it be cheerfully given away. Those stated times may be either weekly, quarterly, half-yearly,

or yearly, according as you can ascertain your income. Those are points of detail of the utmost importance, which any one who is really resolved will soon adjust for himself. But my point is to obtain the firm resolution of steady and habitual liberality for all that remains of life. I do not want a temporary surface glow, but a permanent quickening of the circulation, by greater strength at the heart. Life is ebbing, time is flying, opportunities of doing good are daily growing fewer, and the moment is come for something practical. I plead, then, most importunately plead, for practical attention to this duty *now*. I plead for man's sake, for the Gospel's sake, for *the Lord's sake*, for your own sake.

I PLEAD FOR MAN'S SAKE, *that men may learn that Christians are sincere.* Thousands dwell in the midst of us who never thought of formally disbelieving the word of God; yet they have a habitual suspicion, more than a suspicion, that the practical religion of religious men is only a seemly garb which is beautiful on Sunday, serves to go to church in, and is at all times respectable. This suspicion is one of the most serious obstacles to their own conversion. There are in this city hundreds who would be brought nearer to salvation, did they only feel in their conscience that the faith, hope, and love of Christian men are not a profession, but a matter of the heart. Now all worldly men have one deep instinct: they believe that *a man is sincere in what*

he will pay for. If they, then, see religious men cheerfully and largely paying for their religion, the habit of doubting their sincerity will gradually be worn away. And surely those principles are worth little which are not worth paying for. A religion that did not check our selfishness could not come from a God of love. He who is not willing to pay for his religion has no right to have a religion. Creatures there are, and creatures, too, calling themselves Christians above all names, who would fain take the benefit of Jesus' religion of love, without it costing them any thing! O, could we lift one such soul up and up into yonder celestial light, and there set it upon the Sea of Glass:—as it saw its own image reflected in that sea, with so much of greed, of earthiness, of self, of meanness, shown in the blaze of that day, would it not shriek out in terror, that heaven was the most horrible exposing place whereinto a poor wretch was ever driven?

I plead for man's sake, *that men may learn that Providence is benevolent.* One most ruinous influence at work in society is the general distrust in the vigilance of a power which befriends the right. Most men believe they can prosper more quickly and more surely by keeping an easy conscience than a pure one, by practising clever evasions of right than by boldly shunning all known wrong. To confront this unbelief, to demonstrate before all men that the Power above us does smile upon uprightness and generosity, is the high calling of every godly man.

You are not only to obtain your neighbour's admission that the Lord is King of the world to come,—they are ready enough to grant that: another point needful for their salvation is to bring them to feel that He is Lord and King of the world that now is. They easily believe that He is the disposer of crowns and harps hereafter; but they do not so easily believe that He is the disposer of dollars and cents! Doubting here, for the sake of the pressing to-day, they risk the infinite but unfelt to-morrow. Satan ever boasts, as he did to our Master, that both the good and the glory of this world are in his power, and that to whomsoever he will he gives them. To deny this claim, to maintain the opposite, to lead men to turn upward a reverent eye, and say loyally to the Lord of all, "Both riches and honour come of Thee," nothing is so effectual as that all God's servants shall sacredly honour Him with the first-fruits of their increase. Doing this, it will soon be seen that they who acknowledge Providence bloom in its sunshine, and that seldom indeed is one of their number struck with a blight. Bands—not here and there an individual, as much an exception in the church as in the world, but—large bands of open-handed men, whose works prosper and whose homes rejoice, will stand before the world living witnesses that we are not given over to the keeping of a demon who pampers wrong and famishes goodness.

I plead for man's sake—*that men may learn that commerce is benevolent.* It is not more hurtful than

wonderful how generally even good men look on commerce merely as an engine for fortune-making, and a field of battle for all the selfish passions. Even grave divines may be found calling commerce "the god of this world," with just the same propriety and truth as they, professing to quote Scripture, call money "the root of all evil." "Well, but is not commerce a hatefully selfish thing?" Is not weather a selfish thing? Both are appointed by Providence for the same end; both perverted by man to the same abuse. For the threefold purpose of provisioning, clothing, and adorning this world and its inhabitants, the Lord has made a great unconscious machinery of sky and sea, soil and air, and appointed intelligent workers to watch its processes, and complete the result. Neither weather nor commerce separately will suffice for the provisioning, clothing, and adorning of our world. Without the mechanical agents the intelligent workers are impotent; without the intelligent workers the mechanical agents revolve in vain.

The covetous underwriter makes the storms the servants of his creed; the greedy corn-speculator turns the blessed sunbeams into tools of gain; the bloodthirsty buccaneer makes the genial breeze serve as charger in his murdering onset. Looking at these disgusting perversions of the Lord's instruments, are we to forget that, above evil eyes and unholy hands, One is guiding the weather for the good of all? And coming into commerce—the providential play of intelligent agents for our comfort—

are we to look at the lower side, the motives of traders, and forget the higher side, the design and actual result wrought out by Providence? It is like the web of a cunning weaver: on the lower side you find only tangled threads, on the upper only blooming flowers. Look at commerce as regarded by the hearts of buyer and seller, and selfish indeed is the scene; look at it as designed, ay, as actually wrought out, by the Ruler above, and you see every man in a city provided by the hands of others with all things which earth can offer to his convenience, in such proportion as his means will command. Rise up, then, ye Christian men, ye who know a God, and bless a Providence, rise up, and testify that this commerce, which busies your masses, is not a lawless scramble, but a beneficent appointment whereby every one may become a co-worker with Heaven in plenishing and provisioning the homes of men! Let all see that, when well-won gains come into your hand, you have a joy in scattering them abroad, to spread temporal and eternal happiness among that race for whom all winds blow, and all markets are opened.

I plead for man's sake, *that practical benevolence may be increased.* Of all sources of happiness in a community, none acts so greatly and pervasively as a spirit of true benevolence. Nothing would so much assuage private griefs, or so greatly smooth the relations of class with class, as the general spread of that sacred brother-love, that true fellow-feeling,

which breathes so sweetly in our Christian Scriptures. That widows may not weep unconsoled; that orphans may not roam friendless; that wayward men may not pass a lifetime within sound of church-bells, without ever hearing inside their own door a word of loving exhortation; that the poor may not be set against the rich by envy; that the rich may not be estranged from the poor by contempt; that real Heathens may not live and die in the heart of Christendom; that nations of Pagans may not sit on and on in the darkness of their fathers;—in a word, that this cold world may be warmer, and this troubled race have more joy, open your hand and give; for man's sake, give!

I PLEAD FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE, that it *may be fitly represented.* That is not its own word; but one almost fears to use its own, it is so strong. "That ye may *adorn* the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things." *Adorn* that doctrine! See it so pure, so bright, lovely in the likeness of its Author, and then say where is the life that is to be to it, not a veil to dim its beauties, not a spot to mar its charm, but an *ornament*—what a jewel is to the brow of a fair woman, an attraction for eyes and admiration!

Where is the life that really *adorns* the Gospel? Surely it is not that of a man who calls himself a Christian, and yet to whom no one will turn in his need, as to a certain friend, for body or for soul. Alas for that man from whose door a neighbour in distress instinctively turns away; to whom collectors

for any holy work never think of going! O, who would rest under a roof upon which no man's blessing comes? Not long ago one rich man was letting a splendid seat to another rich man, and, mistaking the character of his customer, he stated, among the many attractions of the place, this great attraction: "*And there are no charities!*" Ah! lay not your dying head on that man's pillow!

The Gospel will be adorned only by men who, not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth, love their neighbour, body and soul;—by men in whom the character of Christ, to some extent, reappears, that character of love and self-sacrifice to which the glory of God and the salvation of man were the sole objects; wealth, or ease, or pride, nothing. Aim, then, aim at such a standard of beneficence as shall attract to the religion you profess the admiring eye of many, who before had seen in it no loveliness!

I plead for the Gospel's sake, *that it may be diffused.* The Lord's commission is, that we "go into *all* the *world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature.*" "To every creature!" Let us remember that injunction. While a human being lives to whom the good tidings of great joy have never been told, our commission is not executed. How much has been done already toward its execution? Half the race of man, and more, are this day without Preachers of the Gospel! And even within Christian lands numbers of holy works, for which the

need is reproachfully plain, remain undone, because the church of God is not sufficiently self-denying to give the means. It is easy to sympathize with missions; to applaud earnest speeches, and kindle with lively hymns. It is easy to feel a generous glow while we sing, in the words of Heber—

> "Waft, waft, ye wind, the story,
> And you, ye waters, roll,
> Till, like a sea of glory,
> It spreads from pole to pole!"

But listen! the winds are sweeping, and have been sweeping from the beginning, over the peaks of the Himalaya and on the shores of Lake Tsad. Now it is the rustle of the breeze, now the shock of the tempest; but listen! Does either sound on the ear of the Heathen the name "Jesus?" The waves are rolling, and from the beginning have been rolling, on the shores of Fijii and of Japan; but does either the gentle ripple, or the boom of the mighty wave, sound the word, "Mercy?"

No; if the story is to be told, it must be told by the voice of living men. And whence are the means to come, to send forth messengers to tell the tidings of grace "to *every creature?*" Dr. Morgan has said that some such change as was effected in science by the discovery of gravitation, or in mechanics by that of steam, would be effected in the powers of the church for good, by the general adoption of the observance for which we plead. And whether we look at our wealthy or our poorer

churches, it is certain that were all their members but brought up even to the practice of giving a tenth, then would their ability to flood the earth with Christian agencies be increased to the astonishment of mankind; while our Societies, though in a lower degree, would put on a new, and hitherto unheard-of, might.

We are drawing near to the hour when we shall take flight from this shore for another. At whatsoever moment we depart, many other souls, from all lands, will be departing too. Who would wish that, in the flight of souls of which he will be one, the majority should be of those who had never heard of Jesus? If this is not to be our case, if that name is to sound on all ears, and to be invoked in all tongues, up and be earnest! Spare not your goods, that the poor in soul may be rich at last.

I PLEAD—reverently it must be said—FOR THE LORD'S SAKE. It is true that all idea of giving a benefit to Him is for ever excluded. "Is it any gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" The sun He has set in our firmament, has rejoiced our world from Adam until now. On him all its beauty and its life depend. Now that he is hidden, the rose has no blush, the lily no whiteness, the meadow no green; a cheerless gloom reduces them all to sameness. To-morrow when he re appears, all the beauties of the landscape will come forth anew. Suppose that then we were all seized with an impulse of admiration, and desired to show how much we

valued his services to man; not all the powers of our race could send him up a ray to make him grander.

He is the emblem of his Maker. In one eternal outflood, benefits stream from Him upon His creatures. Life, joy, redemption,—all come from Him. After ages of daily debt, were all our race this moment seized with a passion of gratitude, did every human heart ask, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" then, though every bosom throbbed, and every hand were strained, we could not add one ray to His glory, one step to the elevation of His throne, one hairbreadth to the extent of His dominions, or one moment to the duration of His reign. Inhabiting eternity, He sits "in the high and holy place," as far above our power to benefit as to injure Him, equally incapable of accession and decay.

Yet He intrusts to us interests that are dear to Him; and, therefore,—

I plead for the Lord's sake, *that His image may be worthily reflected.* The inanimate works of His hand tell much of His strength and skill; the lower animals much of His wisdom to contrive and His might to control: but all this they tell not to themselves, but to their superior, man. They are but works of His, not children, who can show His image, or be "partakers of the Divine nature." From them man can learn nothing as to his Maker's mind on moral questions, on the points whereupon the

deepest anxieties of the conscience turn,—right and wrong, justice, pardon, judgment, and the future. It is only through man that his fellow-men can see the image of God,—man, that wonderful creature, whose complex nature unites the lowest to the highest worlds, bringing matter, animal and spirit, into one being,—a being who, on one extreme, is equal with the clod, and, on the other, by the communing of the Spirit reaches to the throne of the Highest. In him, and in him alone, the image of the holy God may be so reflected, that men here shall learn to "glorify their Father who is in heaven."

But how does he reflect this image who, professing to be a child of God, is yet known to delight in holding and in storing, but to feel a pain in giving? Nothing can be more strictly opposite to the Divine nature than this. The unceasing action of that nature is to pour out unrequited bounties. Return or gain it knows not; and so does it delight in bounty, that no man gives to another in the Lord's name, but He counts the deed as done to Himself. Blessed is that human being in whose goodness some mind first discerns glimpses of the goodness of God!

I plead for the Lord's sake, *that His claims may be vindicated.* I have already said, that many who are willing to look upon Him as God of the world to come, feel as if this world's property was not so directly His and under His hand. For the Creator's glory and the creature's rest, it is needful that all be

taught that the gold and silver, the harvest's yield, flocks, herds, and fisheries, are all His property; that whatsoever man has in his hand, is there only in trust and stewardship, not created nor yet retained by his power; that a Hand unseen can at any moment empty his hand, and a Mind unseen blight the fruit of a life's prudence, by the mistake of a day.

Go, then, and assert the Lord's claims; go and teach man's stewardship, not in word, but in deed. Steadily devote the first-fruits of all wherewith you may be intrusted to holy uses. Let your daily actions say in your neighbours' ears, "Freely ye have received, freely give!"

I plead for the Lord's sake, *that His due praise may be rendered.* In speaking of the effect of Christian liberality, St. Paul tells us that it does not stop at those who are benefited, but passes on, in a certain sense, to the Lord Himself,—"abounds by many thanksgivings to God." To abound does not mean to suffice, but to more than suffice; not only to fill a vessel, but to wave out, or overflow from it. Thus, when an act of Christian goodness fills a suffering heart with joy, it not only thanks the human hand that comforts it, but overflows in the words, "THANK GOD." There is an ear, an open ear, which never closes to the cry of want; but when it listens from heaven to the children of men, to hear if there be any that thank God, often it listens in vain,—often hears praises for the creature, murmurs and

blasphemies for the Creator. O, would you count it a little thing, if, through your own deeds, that ear, ever and anon, heard a fervent "Thank God?" Of all the hands that make melody, none raises such music as his whose touch on the heart-keys of the despairing changes a murmur into a thrilling "Thank God!"

Give, then, freely give, that some poor man who was ready to think that charity was dead on earth, and mercy in heaven, may bless you; and, feeling that it was God who sent you to his side, may cry, "Thank God!" Give, freely give, that the sons of heathen fathers, of cannibals and demon-worshippers, may make scenes which have echoed only to whoop, or yell, or din of orgies, resound with the Christian "Praise God!"

I PLEAD FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, *that you may prosper*. The habit of statedly giving first-fruits of all you receive, tends to prosperity, by the double force of a natural means and a Divine blessing. As a natural means, it works by promoting order and economy. One reason why many tradesmen fail is, that they do not in due time, and with sufficient frequency, ascertain precisely where they are. He who is *determined* that all his increase shall pay its first-fruits to the glory of his Saviour, must ascertain what that increase is. Again: one reason why many persons of fixed income are miserably before their means is, because they have never carefully apportioned to each branch of their expenditure its

due share of their income. Were one portion held sacred, on which no claim whatever should touch, an efficient check would be set up against random living.

The habits of order and economy thus acquired would work together with the blessing which is assured to him who honours the Lord with the first-fruits of all his increase. That a man living steadily up to this principle will prosper, I have no manner of doubt. I once asked a valued friend of mine who had adopted the principle of giving away a tenth in early life, and whom the prospering hand of God had raised from humble beginnings to a position of great and valuable influence, if he ever knew a case in which a man had set out on that principle, and *persevered in it*, and then failed in life. He answered, "Not one."

Worldly men are often led to doubt whether a blessing does attend the labour of a pious man; for they see men who profess religion suddenly brought down. But they must ask whether these men have been faithful to their religion. It often happens that one who begins life well, and is liberal while he has little, yields to that fatal tendency which is strong in all to love money in proportion as it increases. As they become richer in hand, they become poorer in heart. As they acquire more, they give less. I have heard of one who had, when poorer, been in the habit of giving five dollars to a certain good work; now that he is wealthy, he gives half a dollar. And only the other day I heard of a miserable

creature, who is what we call a *very rich man*, who, when applied to in a very urgent case by two Ministers, for a family in need, did at last promise a dollar. But meeting one of the Ministers afterwards, he told him he found he could not give it; for he had so many houses, and had now to pay an increased tax, that he could not spare so much. Ah! how such copper souls are to be pitied! But, these cases only represent a large class. And is it to be wondered at, that if religious men thus allow gold to choke up the springs of feeling, the Lord should smite them? You worldly men, do not judge by such cases! These men were false to their religion, and it is fitting that a blight should overtake them:—indeed, that blight may be their salvation. But he who steadfastly sets apart for the Lord the first portion of all his gains, checks his love of money on the threshold; and by increasing the proportion as his gains increase, he checks the terrible bent to a progressive love of it; so that it is safe for himself, and good for the church, that he should prosper. But how can he prosper who gives a tenth of little, but, when Providence makes it much, thinks his tenth too much to give? Even to that depth of baseness can our poor nature go. Such men, not only in substance, but in very form, "rob God," and may be met by Him with that stark and frightful charge. And if it may be said of other wrongful modes of getting wealth, surely it may of this: "As a partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and

not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

I plead for your own sake, *that you may escape the curse of a carnal mind.* It is possible for a man so to drown his spiritual powers in sordid passion, that the soul within him ceases to have any action but for concerns of the market. Of its high faculties he cannot rob it: it is, and it will be, a soul, with the inherent lights and forces of a soul. But all these he presses into the ignoble service of pelf-gathering. It still has its judgment, capable of deep and holy themes; but this is kept ever poring upon problems lying within the two columns,—dollars and cents. It has its imagination; but this, instead of taking flights to a better country, only dwells on more gold, more houses, more land, more state. It has its fear; but this, forgetting all things really fearful, shudders at nothing except losses. And even its hope, though unquenchable, aspiring only after property, does not wing the soul for heaven, but earths it deeper in pelf. Thus the poor soul is totally shut out from its native air, and the whole man sinks into a machine,—a most wonderful and elaborate machine, worked by spirit-power, for the single use of scraping, scraping, scraping gold!

There are hundreds of souls in this city just like that; and if you would not have your soul degraded into mere spirit-power for working a gold-rake, spring up, and, appealing for help to the Spirit who

is over all, go and teach your hands to do works of generosity, instead of teaching your soul to do works of pelf.

I plead for your own sake, *that you may increase in purity and heavenliness of mind.* It was our Redeemer who first showed the way to make money a means of inclining our affections toward the inheritance of the saints in light. He said: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old," (is not this what you would covet? "*bags which wax not* OLD?") "a treasure in the heavens, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth." Now, mark the philosophy of this: "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" So that, by gradually laying up your treasure in heaven, your heart will gradually follow it there; and thus money, which some treat as capable only of being a bond and a burden, may become to you a connecting wire with the Throne of retributions, and a stimulant to hope for "the resurrection of the just." A farmer who loves to see a full barn, and also to receive in market the price of his crops, yet foregoes the market, and reduces the store in his barn, casts away his precious grain out of his hand, out of his sight, and leaves it buried, lost as to immediate return, trusting it wholly to the bosom of earth, and the eye of Heaven. What effect does this portion of his treasure produce upon him? It turns his thoughts away from the barn, from the market, from the pride of

the one and the gold of the other. It leads his eye often up to the heavens, and his thoughts forward to the coming harvest-day.

Go, then, and sow, not sparingly, but bountifully. Foregoing the proud store, foregoing the present recompense, cast your treasure out of your grasp, out of your sight, cast it with a broad hand and a glad heart; leave it there unseen in the soil of eternity, and under the suns of heaven. Even here the fruit will be, that by degrees, your mind will set itself more strongly on the joys that never wane: and when the harvest-days set in, how many will be fain that they had sowed as you!

I plead for your own sake, *that you may have some good of your money, even to eternity.* In the passage just referred to, our Redeemer shows how we may, by a heavenly use of earthly goods, lay up treasure in heaven. An Apostle tells us of another treasure which, by means of money, we may "heap together for the last days." But this is a treasure of "miseries that shall come upon you." He who, to amass wealth, keeps back the labourer's hire, or falls into other "fraud,"—surely not excepting the fraud which deprives the Lord of the beneficent use of His own gifts,—is, in heaping up money for this world, heaping up "treasure for the last days." While the gold and silver distributed for the Lord's sake, to benefit the souls and the bodies of men, will all be found turned into incorruptible treasure "at the resurrection of the just;" this gold and silver

which no thank-offerings hallowed, and no poor man blessed, on which the eye of the needy looked wistfully, and for which the works of God's church appealed in vain—this, too, will re-appear; its "*rust shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.*" This, O money-lover! is the way in which you have heaped treasure "together for the last days!"

"O, I have not been selfish! It is not for myself I have got something together. I know I must leave it. It is for my children I have saved." Well, perhaps it would have been a blessing to your children, had they been left just with the means of honourably starting in life, the rest depending, under God, on their own conduct. Perhaps the stores you have painfully gathered will breed contentions over your grave, and then hurry your children to folly and to sin—ay, perhaps to poverty.

You have saved for your children! We are ready to admit that, in this, if moderately done, you are a public benefactor; for he who finds a family competing with the poor in the labour market, and leaves it in a condition to employ them instead of competing with them, does a general service. But while you have been saving for your children, what have you saved for yourself? In a week your will may be read; and is it possible that all the savings of your life are invested where they will then be in the hands of others, and nothing invested where it will come to account for you? As with our life, so with our money: he that saveth his money shall lose

it; and he who, for the Lord's sake and the Gospel's sake, loses his wealth shall find it. The only money we save for ourselves is what we give to the Lord.

The same sentiment is quaintly expressed on an old monument in the parish church of Leek, Staffordshire:—

"As I was, so be ye;
As I am, ye shall be;
That I gave, that I have;
What I spent, that I had.
Thus I end all my cost:
What I left, that I lost."

From the moment you depart hence (and how long is that moment away?), not one cent of all you ever handled will remain to you, except that which you freely gave away. When all the rest is in the hands of others, this will abide for you, and at the great day will be apportioned to you, in new forms, and with wondrous increase, before all eyes that ever counted gold, or ever melted with benevolence. Then, if you would save anything for yourself, if you would have any enjoyment from your possessions beyond this uncertain life, go and "put on Christ:" let your own character disappear under His; your own modes of judging and acting give place to His. Give yourself first to Him, and then to the church and the good works the church has to do; and then shall you "lay up in store against the time to come."

"Ah, but I should not like to die poor!" Not like to die poor! For my part I should wish to die rich. WHO DIES RICH? He who, whether he leaves much, or little, or nothing behind him, has treasure laid up in heaven. *He dies rich.* WHO DIES POOR? He who, whatever he leaves behind him, has nothing laid up before him. *He dies poor.*

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

DEAR BRETHREN—During the recent sessions of the General Assembly, at Buffalo, New York, overtures on the subject of Systematic Benevolence were presented, from several Presbyteries, requesting that the Assembly would take some order by which the churches and people of our connection might be led to adopt, and carry out some efficient scheme for sustaining our Benevolent Institutions by regular contributions to their funds. The subject was also brought to the attention of the Assembly in other prominent and emphatic modes. The Reports of our Boards gave utterance to the most earnest desire for securing the hearty and general co-operation of the church in all her courts, and by all the members of her communion, in the various enterprises with whose management they have been entrusted.

Deeply sensible of the intrinsic importance of the subject in all its bearings, and earnestly desirous to make some suitable response to their invitations to action, the Assembly, at an early stage of its proceedings, appointed a Select Committee, consisting of one member from each Synod represented, to which the overtures and other suggestions were referred. This committee, having carefully and maturely considered the whole subject, presented a Report, which was adopted by the Assembly with great cordiality and unanimity.

Feeling it to be very important, together with the resolutions based on that report, calling for action on the

part of the lower courts of the church, and the cheerful co-operation of the people, to communicate also the opinions and sentiments of the Assembly to all the ministers and churches, it was determined, in the want of time to recast the Report into the form of an Address, to publish the whole as adopted by the Assembly, with this brief prefatory statement.

The Assembly solemnly asks your earnest and prayerful consideration of the views here presented, and trusts that you will give all diligence in promptly and faithfully executing the duties herein enjoined on the churches and Presbyteries.

Report of the Select Committee on Contributions to Benevolent objects, presented to the General Assembly, May, 1854.

The Select Committee, to whom was referred the general subject of Contributions to objects of Benevolence, beg leave to report to the Assembly, as follows:

That they have carefully examined the various Memorials and Resolutions committed to them, and are satisfied that these documents express the sentiments of the great majority of the Assembly's Presbyteries on the subject of *methodical efforts for the advancement of Christ's cause and kingdom at home and abroad.*

Your committee, on reviewing the repeated recommendations of the Assembly to the churches, on the subject of contributing to the different causes of benevolence under its direction, are painfully reminded of the wide-spread indifference with which these recommendations have been regarded; and hence they feel a great degree of embarrassment in entering upon the duty assigned them. They are persuaded, however, that the neglect with which the Assembly's action has hitherto been treated in many instances, is not so formidable as to be beyond the reach of

remedy; and to point out that remedy has been the object of earnest and prayerful consideration on the part of your committee.

The extent of this indifference to the Assembly's recommendations, and through them to the Master whose stewards we are, is truly deplorable; and imperatively demands the adoption of adequate measures for its removal.

An examination of the Assembly's Minutes for 1853, reveals some humiliating facts on this subject.

The total number of churches reported, was 2,879.

The whole number of churches reported as having contributed to the Board of Domestic Missions, was 1,322, being 112 *less than one-half the whole number of churches.*

The number reported as having contributed to the Board of Foreign Missions, was 1,063, being 371 *less than half*, and 104 *over one-third* the total number of churches.

749 churches contributed to the Board of Education, being 30 more than *one-fourth* of the whole.

And 440 churches made contributions to the Board of Publication, being 39 *less than one-sixth* of the whole number.

Your committee had not the statistics before them by which to ascertain the proportion that contributed to the Church Extension Fund, another object of benevolence frequently commended by the Assembly; but they are satisfied that the facts would show a much greater deficiency on the part of the churches, than the lowest figures above recorded.

These statements exhibit, in the judgment of your committee, a lamentable disregard of covenant obligations by a *majority* of the Assembly's churches. And the force of these statements would be greatly increased, if the actual number of contributing communicants in the honoured minority of churches, could be distinguished

from those who give nothing to advance the cause of Christ through these channels.

Another item will add to these facts a darker shading. There are many non-communicants in these congregations whose donations materially increase the revenues of our Boards; and just in this proportion are the contributions of our covenanted membership diminished.

And still another consideration deserves to be noticed here. The sums paid to the Board of Foreign Missions outside of our church, the legacies bequeathed to the different Boards, and the private donations amounting to large sums in the aggregate, all go to prove that the collections taken up in a methodical manner in the contributing churches, constitute an annual offering totally unworthy of being laid by 220,000 redeemed sinners, upon the altar of consecration to Him who hath bought us with his own priceless blood.

If these facts could be drawn forth into the definite array of figures, the committee fear that only an aggregate minority of communicants in the contributing churches would be found to sustain methodically and conscientiously the Assembly's cherished instrumentality of doing good to souls.

But there is another point of view from which any delinquencies of the majority of our churches should be examined. The degree of responsibility under any obligation is in proportion to ability to discharge it. Our Master has said, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;" and his apostle has said, "It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Now, it is notorious that a vast amount of wealth is harvested in the Presbyterian Church, and hoarded there, of which the Lord of the harvest receives not a tithe. In addition to this, a large proportion of the current funds which sustain the operations of trade

and business, pass daily through the hands of a numerous class of our communicants, leaving a profit in their possession; or, as the rewards of daily labour, providing abundance of the good things of this life. From all the channels through which money is acquired, with manual labour and without it, in which the present times have an unexampled distinction, and in which our churches largely share, how very small must be the proportion which flows into the treasuries of the Lord!

In the unparalleled prosperity which waits upon production and commerce, *there is a scriptural demand for an unparalleled increase of the funds of organized benevolence.* But your committee are constrained to say, that they look in vain for this result in the funds placed at the disposal of the Assembly's Boards. The enlargement of funds hardly keeps pace with the increase of churches and membership, and falls far behind the enlarged responsibility which accumulating means bring with them. In past seasons of ordinary prosperity, both the number and amount of our contributions should have been greatly multiplied, as we have already seen. When God bestows any good upon us, it is a law both of our moral nature and of his kingdom, that some expressive return should show our grateful sense of his mercies; and when he pours upon us *signal favours*, he expects an appropriate response. Your committee believe that through the length and breadth of the Presbyterian Church, that response which these times of temporal prosperity demand, *has, with almost no exceptions, been withheld.*

Another consideration, and the last one we shall notice here, is, *the daily enlargement of the great field of christian effort.* The theatre for exertion in the cause of Christ is as broad as the world; and access to important points at home and abroad, where sanctified labour may be successfully employed in opening rapidly but not im-

proved. Many fields lie waste, because God's people withhold from God's servants the means to enter and to cultivate them. When the highways are cast up among the nations by the King of Zion, he calls his servants to enter, and by the same act he calls for the means to sustain them. Our responsibility, therefore, widens with the expansion of the field before us. The calls are for the most part unheeded; and the glaring sins of indifference and covetousness rest upon the churches.

How can this adverse state of things be accounted for? Your committee might enlarge upon the causes, but prefer the less unpleasant task of suggesting a remedy.

But there are to any remedy certain barriers, which must be removed. One of these we mention with great reluctance, and yet we sincerely believe that there will be found in it a principal obstacle. We mean *the apathy of the teaching and ruling eldership* in relation to this entire subject. The criminal neglect of many churches to honour the Lord with their substance, and with the first fruits of all their increase, is occasioned in a great measure by the neglect of their teachers to expound faithfully and frequently the *law* of Christ's kingdom in relation to this obvious and explicit duty, explaining the scriptural *method* of obeying it, and the scriptural *motives* to obedience. The word of God on almost every page contains something in relation to this law, its motives, or its method. And in view of this fact, it is difficult to account for the prevalent error, which regards this duty more as *advice* than precept, and more as *optional* than obligatory, unless the solution is discovered in the remissness of the ministry, "rightly to divide the word of truth" on this particular point. Your committee would repel the charge of indiscriminately censuring our brethren in the Lord, whom we love and venerate as a pious, learned, and able ministry, to which many of us belong; but we appeal to the established

principle that faithful pastoral labour in the pulpit, and in the family, is followed sooner or later with commensurate success; and when applied to the point before us, the committee express their firm conviction, founded upon their own experience and observation, that not one of the Assembly's churches which enjoys the stated means of grace, would remain delinquent after receiving the faithful and affectionate instructions of the ministry on the scriptural law of beneficence, its motives, and its method. Give the people light, and by the help of God's Spirit they will walk in it. The want of information is, in many minds, a greater obstacle than want of disposition. The conscience of our people, enlightened by the Spirit of God, and regulated by the word of God, may be safely trusted on this or any other subject. The clergy and the laity of our beloved Zion believe that they draw nearer to the great Source of truth, in doctrine and in polity, than any other branch of the Church of Christ. If we occupy such a sacred nearness to the Fountain of infinite truth and love, let it be seen that our practice corresponds with our profession, and our progress with our advantages.

The committee quote from one of the resolutions placed in their hands, that "the doctrine of the scriptures interpreted by the Confession of Faith," is, "that collections for pious uses, are a part of the regular ordinances of worship on every Sabbath."* The truth should be plainly stated,

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* *Form of Government, Chap. VII.*—The ordinances established by Christ, the Head, in a particular church, which is regularly constituted, with its proper officers, are prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding and preaching the word of God; administering baptism and the Lord's Supper; public, solemn fasting and thanksgiving, catechizing, *making collections for the poor, and other pious purposes;* exercising discipline and blessing the people.

Directory for Worship, Chap. VI. sec. 5.—The sermon being ended, the minister is to pray, and return thanks to God; then let a psalm be sung; *a collection raised for the poor, and other purposes of the church;* and the assembly dismissed with the Apostolic benediction.

that while our creed is orthodox, the practice of many of our churches in this department of christian duty is heretical; and they are so far guilty of "holding the truth in unrighteousness." The question, whether *covetousness*, like any other sin, should not be disciplined, ought to engage in these days of Christ's coming, the profound attention of every Presbytery and every session; and no person, in the opinion of the committee, should be admitted to sealing ordinances, whose views on this subject are not clear and scriptural. Every member of the church, is under a solemn recorded obligation to do his part to sustain the cause of Christ. What his part is, he is left to determine in prayer before God, and in the light of the Divine word. He is a labourer in the vineyard, and must work. No excuse will justify, but absolute inability. Whoever is able to earn his living, is able to give something to Christ's cause. At convenient seasons, he should "lay by him in store, as God has prospered him," a portion of his earnings, for thank-offerings, to the Giver of every good. Let it be done with consistent liberality; for "the liberal soul shall be made fat." Let it be done cheerfully; for "God loveth a cheerful giver." Every communicant who is above the necessity of receiving alms, who withholds his gift, however humble, is guilty of the sin of "covetousness, which is idolatry." The Saviour pointed out a much loftier act of self-denial than the foregoing, when he commended the poor widow's donation, and valued her two mites, which were all her living, above the costlier contributions of ostentatious alms.

The wealth in the Presbyterian Church, in whatever form it may exist or circulate, *is consecrated wealth.* It became so, by the act which received its possessors into membership. And your committee are convinced, that the practical denial of this truth clearly reveals one great cause of the decline of vital godliness, which extensively

prevails throughout all our borders, and over which this Assembly mourns. The tithes and offerings are not brought into the storehouse; and consequently, God's blessing is not poured out, and Zion languishes. Powerful awakenings are almost unknown. The ministry is not adequately supplied with recruits, nor adequately supported. Sinful conformity to the customs and fashions of a world lying in wickedness, and under God's curse, is rapidly levelling the distinctions which should be preserved erect and prominent, between the church and the world. This evil is the more dangerous, because its approach is gradual, and its inroads covered by specious pretexts, that wear the garb of christian propriety, which is a character frequently assumed by covetousness and pride.

In order to arrest these destructive tendencies, all scriptural means must be employed. But your committee are confined to one of these. And they would urge upon their brethren, the much disregarded truth, that *liberality is an indispensable means of grace.* To employ it successfully, the scriptural motives to beneficence should be fixed in the conscience, and influence the heart. These motives may be variously expressed; but we arrange them, for the sake of brevity, into three classes:

1. *Philanthropy* is one of these. But it is the lowest motive, and may be shared in common by the religious and irreligious. Where it exists as a controlling motive, it is guided more by emotion and sympathy, than by principle; and often leads the christian to find in worldly associations, the ways of doing good, to the partial or entire exclusion of the church, which is the great benevolent society formed by Jesus Christ, its Head; and thereby much of the means of usefulness, which ought to flow through sanctified channels, is expended upon measures of temporary or doubtful utility.

2. *Love to the souls of men* is another motive, which

elevates the preceding from the temporal to the eternal. It is philanthropy *sanctified*. It does not neglect the physical wants of man; but it values beyond every other estimate his spiritual necessities. The realities of death, judgment, and eternity, apprehended as not far distant, coupled with the awful fact, that the day of grace is hourly closing upon thousands of our fellow-men, present an overwhelming motive to sanctified exertion.

3. But there is still another motive, which absorbs the first and second, as the greater includes the less. It is a *supreme regard to the glory of God*. This is the highest motive that can be addressed to the conscience and the heart. It places all human interests in their true relations to our Maker. It consecrates time, talents, and property, to the service of Christ. It sets out from the right point of exertion, to relieve the temporal and spiritual wants of man. It is sustained by the approbation of conscience, and the favour of God. If the most benevolent plans, prosecuted under this paramount motive, should fail of success, and labour and means appear to be thrown away, the reflection that every act was done for God's glory, will extract the sting of disappointment; for God's will has been done, and the reward is laid up in heaven. This motive, therefore, supplies what no other can. It has less to do with mere human feelings and sympathies, and more to do with divine principles, which should regulate all the desires and susceptibilities of the soul. This is the motive which should be brought to bear continually upon the christian life and practice; and when its influence shall become paramount in all our communions, the Presbyterian Church will come up with one supreme purpose to the service of her Head, and lay her sons and daughters, and her costliest offerings, upon the altar of consecration to his cause.

Fully impressed by the facts and principles thus

briefly presented, we turn anxiously to inquire, in what way the General Assembly may, in the exercise of its legitimate power, endeavour to remedy the evils on which we have animadverted, and draw out the resources of the whole church, in sustaining the enterprises of christian benevolence, which have been wisely organized by the Assembly itself, or by other ecclesiastical authorities of our church.

As a fair exposition of the great principles of a scriptural church order, we believe our constitution now provides all the requisite organization for efficient effort, in every department of such enterprises.

The church is a divinely constituted missionary society, and its courts are specific forms of executive agency, for the work of propagating, as well as preserving the truth.

To the General Assembly, as the Supreme Court of the church, charged with the duty of providing measures, whose operations may be co-extensive with our ecclesiastical limits, "for the promotion of truth, charity, and holiness, in all the churches," properly belongs the work of presenting to the Presbyteries and other subordinate courts, and urging on their adoption and execution, by the moral power with which it has been intrusted, wise and practicable methods of procedure in all the departments of service, necessary to the fulfilment of the great obligations devolving on the church.

This duty can be performed without entrenching on any rights of conscience, neither "lording it over God's heritage," by enacting laws which require a blind and implicit obedience, nor arrogating to itself the province of the State, in laying taxes even for the support of the best interests which are connected with human duty and destiny Its power is moral. It is that with which the church has clothed it. Though more than advisory, it is less than arbitrary. To those bodies, the Presbyteries, which, by

commissioners, constitute the Assembly itself, it can address the language of requisition to the discharge of duties clearly recognized and cheerfully admitted. The Presbyteries sustain a similar relation to the pastor and church sessions; the former, personally, and the latter by representatives, being their constituent elements. These, in turn, sustain a similar relation to the people, who have submitted themselves, under the laws of the church, and according to the principles of a moral government, to their authority. When, therefore, the various courts of the church have established instrumentalities for the promotion of religious knowledge, they are not only privileged, but bound to use the authority with which they have been entrusted, to procure the means, for rightly sustaining such instrumentalities, by devising the plans, and diligently supervising their proper execution.

It is easily seen, that were all the members of our communion to comply with the Scripture injunction, to give of their substance, for sustaining the cause of christian benevolence, "as God has prospered them," there would be a large increase in the incomes of all our schemes, whether connected with the church at large, as represented in the Assembly, or established by any of our subordinate ecclesiastical authorities. Now, to procure such contributions, it is not so material, that any particular plan be urged on the churches, in whose details all should agree, and according to whose provisions all should act. All that is properly demanded, is that the duty of securing the desired result should be urged, and its execution enforced. If an ecclesiastical court possesses the right to prescribe any particular duty, it must also possess the right to enquire into its performance.

According to these plain and simple principles, which are clearly and succinctly presented in the overture submitted by the Presbyteries of Lexington and Elizabethtown, we are prepared to recommend for the adoption of the

Assembly, the following Resolutions, which embrace in substance those presented in that overture:

1. *Resolved*, That this Assembly hereby enjoins upon the pastors of our churches, to give greater prominence in the ministration of the word, to the doctrine of the Scripture, as set forth and interpreted in our standards, (more particularly chap. 26, sec. 2, of the Confession; in quest. 121 of the Larger Catechism; in chap. 7, of the Form of Government; and in chap. 6, sec. 5, of the Directory for Worship,) namely, that "saints are, by profession, bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion, in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities, which communion, as God offereth opportunities, is to be extended unto all those, who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus," "giving and lending freely, according to their abilities, and in conformity to this doctrine, recognizing as one of the ordinances, established by Christ," in connection with the sermon, prayer, and praise, a "collection raised for the poor, and other purposes of the church."

2. *Resolved*, The Presbyteries which have not anticipated the provisions of this action of the Assembly, are most earnestly and affectionately enjoined, (1) at their meeting following the rising of this Assembly, to take order, that the ministers and church sessions in their bounds, shall be directed to adopt *some practical method*, by which an opportunity shall be afforded, and an invitation given to all the members of their congregations, to contribute regularly to the objects of christian benevolence, recognized by the Assembly, in the organization of the Boards of the church, and to such other institutions as, to them, may seem right.

And (2) at every spring meeting to institute a proper inquiry into the diligence of ministers and church sessions, in executing the provisions of such method.

3. *Resolved*, The Presbyteries are further enjoined to